

# **Reconnecting with Indigenous knowledge in education: exploring possibilities for health and well-being in Xhora, South Africa**

By

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# Declaration

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Date: .....April 2019.....



# Dedication

I dedicate this significant work to all AmaBomvane in the communities of Xhora and all Indigenous people worldwide as they continue navigating struggles of resistance to domination.

I also dedicate this work to my mother, my son, my sister and her children and lastly my brother. They are pillars of strength who have been patiently waiting for this piece of work.

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# Abstract

Owing to coloniality, Eurocentric and Western thinkers have been privileged in knowledge production while African Indigenous thinkers and knowers have been subjugated.

Consequently, western knowledge has been described as universal knowledge, while Indigenous people's knowledges remain characterized as backward and primitive. In this arrangement, the current education system reproduces inequities of knowledges. How this knowledge arrangement influences the persisting negative health status among Indigenous people, and the role of formal schooling in this, remains unexplored in South Africa and beyond.

There is a need to explore and describe from the perspectives of Indigenous people the potential relevance of Indigenous knowledges in transforming the formal education system for better health and well-being.

Using case study design supported by narrative inquiry as methodological frameworks, I facilitated a case of narratives with AmaBomvane in Xhora (Eastern Cape province, SA) to:

- describe AmaBomvane's rural experience of the influence of the formal education system on their Indigenous traditions and knowledges and their links to health and well-being;
- explore what stakeholders in these communities (elders, youth and teachers) identify as some of the Indigenous knowledges and ways of teaching and learning; and
- explore how the identified knowledges and teaching and learning strategies of AmaBomvane can inform curriculum development and implementation in the formal schooling system.

The case study provided contextual boundedness and situatedness to the research, while narrative inquiry uncovered the stories that formed the basis for exploring and describing the case in question. The participants played an active role in guiding the research process. Indigenous methods (talking circles and storytelling using the sagacity approach) were used to collect narrative, primary data from residents of four sampled villages. In-depth interviews with teachers and principals from schools across the villages and other methods such as researcher observations and spontaneous conversations were used. The sagacity approach, reflexivity, reciprocity and continuous relationship-building grounded these methods.

A case of seven co-constructed narratives highlighted three typologies (*Amaqaba*, *Amagqobhoka*, and *Agonizers: the uncomfortable in-betweeners*) related to the complex interactions and dynamics between formal schooling and the communities and/or homes. These typologies reveal the intersecting operations of coloniality of power, being, knowledge and doing. The literacies of AmaBomvane challenge the academy by bringing considerable insight into our understanding of knowledge itself, learning and the purpose of education and curriculum. The inseparable link between everyday doing, knowing and being was highlighted as central to knowledge production. AmaBomvane's conceptualization of knowledge also highlighted an inextricable link between health and education, thus advocating for an education that enhances living well.

In conclusion, colonial education emerged as a potential negative social determinant of AmaBomvane's health as it produces people who are deeply alienated from themselves, their lands, cultures, ancestors, languages and knowledges. Its historical roots, forced assimilation and the unquestionable characteristic of curriculum create a colonising attitude amongst learners and educators. I therefore argue that coloniality and colonial education be recognised as broader social determinants of ill health. I argue that centering Indigenous knowledges and cultures within the formal schooling curriculum may contribute to strengthening positive Indigenous identities, thus contributing to better physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual health and well-being. There is an urgent need to prepare educators who are socially conscious and competent to facilitate a health-enhancing curriculum that enables learners to live well. Given the revealed inextricable link between health and education, I also recommend that South African national curriculum immerse health and well-being as a core area of learning. I have thus developed an Indigenous-decolonial framework for reconstructing curriculum for health and well-being as a guide.

# OPSOMMING

Kolonialisme het tot gevolg gehad dat die Euro-sentriese en Westerse denkers voordeel trek in so verre die verkryging van kennis. Dit is voor die hand liggend dat die Westerse kennis as die universele kennis aanvaar word, terwyl die kennis van verskeie etniese groepe in Afrika as primitief beskou word. In die huidige onderwysstel kom heelwat ongelykhede van kennis voor. Met die formele skolestelsel word die gesondheidsorg in Suid-Afrika ook nie ontgin nie. Dit is uiters belangrik dat die relevansie van etniese kennis ondersoek word om sodoende die formele onderwysstelsel te transformeer sodat die gesondheidsorg en welsyn van die etniese groepe bevorder word.

Met behulp van 'n metodiese raamwerk verwys ek graag na die geval van AmaBomvane in Xhosa (Oos-Kaap).

Daar is gefokus op die volgende:

- die vervreemding van etniese kennis wat AmaBomvane ondervind het met die formele opvoedkunde.
- Die gaping wat veroorsaak is deur die vervreemding en onkunde binne die onderwysstelsel.
- Daar word gekyk na maniere hoe dit verhoed kan word dat die kinders vervreemd raak van hul taal, kultuur en herkoms.

Deur hierdie gevallestudie is die ligging en grense aan die navorsing verskaf terwyl die ondersoek van die vertellings die basis gevorm het waarop die navorsing gedoen is. Die deelnemers aan hierdie studies, het 'n aktiewe rol in die uitvoering van die proses gespeel. Etniese gespreksvoering, groepsbesprekings en vertellings is gebruik om die inligting van die inwoners van 4 stamme bymekaar te maak. Daar is ook in diepte gesprekke met onderwysers en skoolhoofde gehou om meer inligting van die stamme en etniese groepe in te win. Die interpersoonlike verhoudings onder die mense van die stamme het bygedra tot die navorsing.

'n Gevallestudie is gedoen waar 7 vertellings saamgestel is om die tipologie van 3 groepe (Amaqaba, Amagqobhoka en Agonizers) te beklemtoon wat almal te doen gehad het met die interaksies en dinamika tussen formele opvoedkunde en die etniese gemeenskappe. Hierdie tipologieë het die bedrywighede van kolonialiteit van mag, kennis en bestaansreg onthul. Die geletterdes van AmaBomvane daag die akademisie uit deur goeie insig te bring tot die begrip van die kennis, en die doel van opvoedkunde en die kurrikulum. Die onlosmaaklike skakel tussen die daaglikse doen en late, kennis en welstand is beklemtoon. Die AmaBomvane se

begrip van die kennis is ook uitgelig as 'n onlosmaaklike skakel tussen gesondheidsorg en opvoedkunde, dus is voorspraak gemaak vir opvoedkunde om die welsynsorg en lewens van die etniese groepe te bevorder.

Ten slotte kan ons sê dat die koloniale opvoedkunde gewys het dat dit 'n negatiewe uitwerking op die sosiale vlak van die AmaBomvane se welsyn gehad het aangesien dit veroorsaak het dat die mense hulself van hul land, kulture, voorvaders, taal en kennis gedistansieer het. Die historiese agtergrond het daartoe gelei dat onderwysers en leerlinge ongevraagde karaktereienskappe geplaas het op 'n koloniale benadering in die kurrikulum skep. Ek stel dus dat erken moet word dat kolonialisme en koloniale opvoedkunde sosiale gedrag en gesondheidsorg benadeel. Ek glo dus dat etniese kennis en kultuur binne die formele onderrig wel kan bydra tot die versterking van etniese identiteite om sodoende beter fisiese, sosiale, geestelike gesondheid asook welstand te waarborg.

Dit is dus van uiterste belang dat opvoeders wat bevoegd is en 'n sosiale gewete het, opgelei moet word om leerders te ondersteun om 'n beter leefwyse aan te leer om sodoende hul algehele welstand te bevorder. Met die gegewe inligting rakende die onlosmaaklike skakel tussen opvoedkunde en gesondheidsorg, stel ek voor dat die Suid-Afrikaanse nasionale kurrikulum aangepas sal word met gesondheidsorg en welsyn as die kern van opvoedkunde. Ek het 'n etniese de-koloniale raamwerk ontwerp wat gebruik kan word as 'n riglyn om die kurrikulum te verbeter.

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction to the study**

## Introduction

In 1845 Frederick Douglass theorised knowledge as not only gained through observation but through self-realisation. Indigeneity (which I understand to be the quality and state of being Indigenous) and working within Indigenous contexts is about reciprocity and relationships which require an acknowledgement and understanding of positionalities and relations to place. It is thus important that I locate myself in terms of the background informing my perspectives as well as recognising the lands on which I did this work. For this reason, I resume this chapter by narrating my own experiences of struggle and confrontation with formal education and I use this experience to position where I am thinking from. This experience informed the focus and interest in this doctoral study. Reflecting on my own experience has helped me make sense of the study participants “AmaBomvane” and to see myself through them as our sites of struggle often seemed to intersect. This, in turn, influenced me in undertaking a qualitative study that is grounded in building and keeping relations.

This reflection is a buildup to the problem statement as articulated by the participants and supported by literature. I do this because Indigenous knowledge (IK) studies target local phenomena instead of using external theory to define a research issue. As Christian (2000 cited in Chilisa 2012) argues, Indigenous people have always theorised in various forms which are different from western forms of abstract logic. Additionally, given that all knowledge is contextual, for research problems to be fully understood within the value systems of the researched and defined from their perspective, it was critical for me to ground myself and their pre-existing stories as justification for doing this study. This situated position not only minimised communicating the experiences of AmaBomvane mainly using non-situated thinking but also emphasised the notion of knowledge as contextual. In this regard, to fully define and understand research problems from within the value systems and perspectives of the researched, such grounding is critical. Additional literature thus became useful for illustrating existing gaps in the body of knowledge and in explaining the contribution made by the enquiry. These sections are followed by a description of the study context. Lastly, I locate the study within a body of scholarship and unpack key concepts of the study. In this thesis, I use “Indigenous” with a capital “I” as an act of recognising and affording respect and humanity to Indigenous people. Indigenous people have spent generations in the lower case following the Western/modern logic which regards them as existing outside the modern time.

## 1. Positioning the researcher

Personally, as a young Indigenous Black woman born and bred in Mount Fletcher (an area located in what was known as ‘Transkei’ of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa), I have battled with feelings of being split between two ways of being and knowing throughout my education and later professional life. We<sup>1</sup> grew up speaking both isiXhosa and Sesotho. These are the two common languages spoken in the area. We spoke isiXhosa because it is our mother tongue and it is what we ended up taking as home language for study at school. So, it became the main language to speak with both parents at home as well. Sesotho was spoken minimally and only when we were with the rest of my father’s family. Family rituals, practices and other gatherings were the sites where we mostly spoke Sesotho.

My basic schooling experience was markedly different from life at home. Almost everything I was taught, and how I was taught, never spoke to my home reality and knowledges. Therefore, I wondered how what I am learning was going to help me to navigate life. As a result, school was a space of contested meaning even though I was performing very well academically. Aikenhead and Jegende (1999) argued that the compartmentalisation of knowledge in our current education systems enables learners to master concepts in the classroom while being unable to apply the same concepts within their everyday life. In this way, academic success and assimilation come with a loss of culture and alienation (Aikenhead 1996).

These assumptions are embedded in the chosen dominant language of instruction within the schooling site. We were always ‘forced’ to speak English within school grounds but that is where English ended. This was limiting when it came to contributing and participating in class as we were socialised mostly in isiXhosa. This highlighted the importance of language as interlinked with knowledge. The English boundary signified a way of controlling how much one, as a learner, could bring the home knowledge into the formal ‘civilised’ space of academic knowledge. This was successful through taking away our very own home languages within school grounds. I am not in any way dismissing English. Rather, I am underlining the assumption that comes with the choice to privilege one knowledge over others. Essentially, this also spoke to how I had to unlearn what I took from home in order to

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<sup>1</sup> ‘We’ refers to my siblings and I.

learn at school. I was learning not to be myself, but rather to succeed through this denial and erasure of self.

In this thesis I argue that the education system, in its current state, is characterised by two main points of difficulty to many rural Indigenous learners which make transition from, and within the different levels of schooling to post-schooling activities by no means seamless. The first problematic transition is that Indigenous children from rural backgrounds enter the school system already carrying wide inequalities based on their socio-economic status. A second problematic transition is the shift from mother-tongue instruction to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching, which most children must go through. This particular transitional challenge has vast implications because language carries the knowledge, culture and identity of the people. Language also influences the framework through which we engage and make meaning of our everyday experiences of life. In encouraging learners to place more emphasis on the English language to the detriment of their own Indigenous languages disparities are created between knowing and learning, thus affecting issues of identity in life. As Bredlid (2003) puts it, it is not only a matter of linguistic code-switching but a collision of knowledge systems which is a far more serious and substantial issue in learning. The consistent failures lie in the continued epistemological hegemony of the West in the curriculum and the marginalisation of Indigenous epistemologies as an education discourse of the new dispensation (Bredlid 2003, 2012). It is no surprise that the South African democratic dispensation and an era of transformation is still deeply rooted in capitalist and colonial values and ideals, and characterised by gross poverty, social-economic and health disparities, and a disintegration of people from their own nature (Mahapa 2015).

In 2003, my sister and I moved to a Roman Catholic boarding school in Matatiele for Grade 10. The school was part of a mission made up of both primary and high school as well as the church which included premises for nuns and priests. The mission was situated +/-15kms from the closest village with no public transport, which totally separated us from village communal life. The whole set up and socialisation was very different from home. We had church every evening, bells rang for meal times, to go to class, for study time after lunch, for chores and for prayer time. Even the diet was different from home food which was rich in home produced vegetables. There was structure in the sense that everything operated on a strict clock schedule. It was a movement away from home – from the familiar.

Home was where there were specific activities that I knew I had to do, where I would watch the sunset, where I would interact with my parents and ask a lot of questions to understand my surroundings. Embedded in these different moments at home were parents, uncles and other adults teaching us how to work in the garden, water the plants and which plant to fetch when you have pimples all over your face, which plant to use for flu, stomach ache, headache and so on. It was where I would play with my siblings, learning to make use of our natural resources such as dough to make play cars and animals with my brother. Home was where I learnt survival activities such as how to cook, clean the house and fetch water. Though there were certain expectations, home was still flexible. Home was that part of the world where the sun, the moon, stars and roosters usually told the time. Home was where we would sit around the fire *sisoja umbona* (roasting corn), cooking *isigwampa* (a common traditional meal prepared by combining different types of green leaves from the garden with mealie meal). During these times, everyone will be laughing, sharing stories and jokes. Home was where we had different types of fruit trees growing all around us and we would eat peaches, plums, apricots etc. from the garden. Corn, isigwampa and fruits would at times be an evening meal on its own. The soil was fertile and the harvest plentiful. There was hardly any hunger nor money needed for staple food-related needs. Home was where I learnt that land is my resource for life.

School, on the other hand, was not like home. Playing was restricted and we only engaged in activities that were part of the routine of the school. Church dominated life at school and this is where I started resenting church. Much of the traditional and ancestral ways of living at home were dismissed in this Christian-centric order. This made school less relevant for practical life back at home. There was also an overemphasis on being orderly and well behaved at school, otherwise you would be sent home which was humiliating. The power of defining reality remained dominantly with the school. Since these early years of schooling, for me it has always been about adjusting and battling with feelings of disconnect. From an early age, I learnt that in order to learn, I had to become less and less of myself. I continued to experience this in professional life where it became more and more personal to me.

In 2006, I started university and it was even scarier in Cape Town than at boarding school. Every time I introduced myself, people seemed irritated by this so called difficult name and they would keep asking if there is no other easy name. It was as if they knew that I had an English name. I ended up introducing myself with my second name, Yvonne. But I noticed that this was creating discomfort within me and I started getting confused. When asked a

name, I would be very confused as to which name I should use. One lecturer advised that I go back to my first name because there will come a time where I will hate being called by this English name. It was indeed like that, I hated being called Yvonne this side and being called Lieketseng on the other side. The problem of the name was not constructed by a lack of familiarity with the name, but rather by the name being a problem. This is to say, my identity was a problem and to fit in such systems, I had to leave behind a part of me. This is similar to having to unlearn knowledge from the home in order to learn in this education system.

Additionally, what created discomfort were the divisions at university – those who could speak English on the one hand, and the likes of me on the other, who tried to speak it – living with the label of ‘a very strong rural background’. I was not ashamed, and my value system was stronger compared to harsh urban and university life. However, there was that sense of needing to belong everywhere, be it in class or at the residence. More overwhelmingly, were feelings of inferiority that I was starting to own. I remember three particular incidents as I was going through my 4-year undergraduate degree, which demonstrate the struggle to relate and identify within the formal education system. I personally experienced this throughout.

The first incident is related to the continuous struggle for Black rural scholars to identify and relate to the knowledge produced in formal academic spaces. My interest in the topic of this research study was sparked by this concern way back at varsity during my undergraduate training. It was during a course called political science and occupational therapy. We had to prepare a presentation related to power and politics and contextualise it within our experiences as occupational therapy students. I had sleepless nights with my team mates trying to work on a topic and we kept bumping our heads on the issues of curriculum and how we were just struggling to relate. We were struggling not because we were less intelligent or struggling to understand. We fully comprehended, and we were passing with good marks but the element of relating and identifying with what was being taught was the issue. This speaks to the issue of succeeding through a continuous denial of self. First, there was no Black lecturer we could see ourselves in. Secondly, the slang words and learning activities were strange to us and our world. Thirdly, it was hard to take initiative as introducing anything unusual to this world was risking failure. Struggling to find meaning in what you do as a scholar was hard. However, what was more difficult was when you were with clients (during practical Occupational Therapy work), trying to act like you feel the space, when in truth you were not there. Activities were strange, contexts different but you were expected to become familiar with them. It was good to learn other contexts, but what



was of concern was that no space was ever given to learn about the Black context and its ways of being and doing. I found myself mostly memorizing with no meaning captured whatsoever while I also was simply lacking the language to clarify my resistance.

The second incident relates to how we or clients as Black rural bodies would often be used as tools, examples and test tubes for every demonstration related to ill health and we had to listen and do as the therapist says. Throughout my studying, I never came across a case where another person who was not Black was used. In a knowledge system that constantly reminds you that you are not good enough after some time you start doubting yourself. This was the story of my education life. This takes me to my second year in a module called human occupations. As part of an assignment, we had to observe an occupation performed by a group of people and analyse this. Now, part of staying on residence, I had always taken note of big groups of Coloured<sup>2</sup> people partying, drinking and smoking oak-pipe in an open space in front of the pub that was called the condom square. I presented this observed occupation and analysed it as I saw it happen. How dare I make such observations – the whole class was upset with me. How can I choose to present about Coloured people? Was I surprised? Not at all; of course who am I as a Black body to observe other races? Of course, it can only be a Black body that should be observed, made example of, used for demonstrations, tests, pilots and so on. This only lens within which a Black person was seen was not my reality and definitely not how I would like to learn and be represented. This knowledge space was not liberating but was destroying me, my confidence, and my identity. This obviously had implications for my learning as I continued being silenced while the feelings of the privileged were nursed.

I also remember a third incident, in first year, having to do an activity on the occupations of different age groups. We had to cut out activities of different age groups from magazines and indicate what intervention they could be used for. The challenge here was that my people's activities were not in magazines for cutting. Again here, the activities that I could relate to and the relevant knowledges of these activities as related to different age groups had no space and were not useful in this context. This struggle continued into working life spaces where

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<sup>2</sup> In the South African context, this is an apartheid racial category which referred to people of mixed blood/race. They mostly speak Afrikaans. In this study, I refer to Coloured as a cultural identity, not skin colour (Erasmus 2001)

the order of the day was to make clients fit into interventions and not interventions serving the life of people.

When I started working, it was a challenge to then transfer and apply all this knowledge to the world that I grew up in with the people I could relate to. It was a struggle to develop relevant and meaningful interventions which met the local needs, drawing on examples of the wisdom and history of local people. Through my education, I was conditioned to think that this wisdom had no place. When working, I felt stuck in institutions waiting for clients (as instructed) and not being allowed to go out to the communities to learn and work with them in the creation of their health and well-being. Often, I observed clients being shouted at and stigmatised when they say they have used their own Indigenous ways before coming to the hospital. I observed clients being labelled as lacking insight when they simply did not have the language to express themselves to the 'literate' generation. Professionals often got upset when clients said 'my grandmother said I should not do this' in a system where there is no understanding of where the clients are coming from and how they live their lives. This resulted in the silencing and devaluing of the older people at home. As a colonial legacy, these observed and witnessed practices underpinned the continuing prejudicial and undermining attitudes towards Indigenous people's ways and choices of being, knowing and doing.

I later saw this happening in the disability work where disabled people often have to deny themselves in an able-bodied world (Swartz, Bantjes & Bissett 2018; Bezzina 2018). Bezzina speaks about how colonial conquest disrupted traditional communities and how they integrated, took care of and valued disabled people. I came to see some of my experience in this disability work. Bezzina agrees with Shakespeare (1996) who states that disabled people are socialised to think of themselves as inferior to others (able-bodied people). This is how minds are colonised, and the colonised end up accepting this attitude of inferiority. Similarly, in my experience, I learnt, to not be myself, to deny myself in order to succeed and be recognised. There is strong sense that my educational and professional development was about succeeding at the cost of erasing myself. As I developed this interest, I started noting that literature also raises this disconnect as an issue in learning and in the first part of this thesis I will be building an argument on this.

It is from this background that I became interested in understanding how other people are experiencing this disconnect and sense of inferiority. During this time, I came across Mji's

(2012) work on Indigenous people of Xhosa and as I was reading this work, I was drawn by the finding that AmaBomvane perceive formal education as bringing an experience of alienation and disavowal which in turn undermines their health and well-being. At this stage I knew that I needed to understand how Indigenous people experience this same disconnect I went through from their own perspectives.

It was clear that literature supports that there is indeed an existing educational disconnect which translates to negative health and well-being of Indigenous people. I started questioning whether we can ever be effective in what we practice and teach if the same teachings and practices do not reflect the epistemologies of the majority we serve. I value my African identity and its education and it is this value that motivated me to carry out this study. This PhD study offered me the platform to bring forth into conversation the often silenced and marginalised voices. It has also allowed for these marginal voices to speak back and up to the dominant systems of power. My ultimate aim is to begin a journey of reconciling these different knowledges, but before doing this, I needed to understand how Indigenous people still based in the rural areas understand this disavowal and disconnect, from their own perspectives.

## **2. Problem statement**

AmaBomvane in the study by Mji (2012) are of the perception that the introduction of formal education to their villages has brought ill health. They are concerned that the education introduced undermines the traditions and rituals of their people including the longstanding relationship between themselves and nature. They also perceive formal education as having failed to strengthen their understanding of themselves, that is a cultural identity but often perpetuates marginalisation and abandonment of their culture. They see this system as alienating them from who they are while also making them consider both their culture, and what Oyewumi (1997) refers to as a 'world sense,' as inferior. The issues raised by AmaBomvane raise profound concerns about the erasure and denial of their Indigenous identities. They also raise concerns related to what may seem to be a forced system of unlearning their ways of knowing, being and doing.

The South African education system is known for chronic failures despite its increasing expenditure (Mpofu-Walsh 2017). Its dysfunctional status was articulated by the Minister of Basic Education, Motshekga since 2010 as a cause for concern. This articulation matters in a post-apartheid South Africa because it is mostly felt and experienced by the previously disadvantaged Indigenous people especially in rural contexts. Spaul (2012) recently reported

that fewer than half of learners who start school reach Grade 12, more so in South Africa. He further reports that, on one hand, many learners matriculate but remain unemployable while also unable to continue with their further education. On the other hand, the education system is unable to provide these young people with diverse knowledges and skills that they need to build on what they have to grow and be locally and globally competitive.

A lack of political will is evident in the policy reform process. Despite having moved from National Curriculum Statements (NCS) to the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (C2005), and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) many practising teachers are still struggling with curricula integration of the actual content and pedagogy of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the classroom. Studies show lack of implementation of curricula which centres and builds on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) (Govender 2009; Ogunniyi 2007) despite the development of the IKS policy of 2004. While part of this difficulty is attributed to the mainstream teacher training, it may be the case that the government has been paying lip service to IKS within the formal education system. This raises further questions as observed by AmaBomvane. How are AmaBomvane experiencing this formal education and how is it contributing to the alienation of their their children? How are their interactions with formal education strengthening who they are and their ways of life? What is making their children turn their backs on their own base of knowledge?

While there is an increasing body of literature worldwide showing the influence of cultures of Indigenous peoples on their health and well-being, there remains a gap on the influence of the South African formal education system on health and well-being. Where education is identified as a role player in social determinants of health, it is often only narrowed to diet-related school health programmes thus leaving other crucial aspects of health. Various IKS studies advocate an interface of IKs in order to make formal education meaningful and relevant. However, there remains a gap on firstly how AmaBomvane perceive their current interactions with the formal education system. Secondly, how do these interactions influence their ways of being, doing and living. Thirdly, there is a gap on the influence of the historic subjugation of IKs on the enhancement of the lives of AmaBomvane. Lastly, of equal importance, is to question the potentially meaningful role of IKs in formal education for better health and well-being, hence the significance of this study.

### **3. Identifying & describing the community of interest within which the case was situated**

The study setting is KwaBomvane in Xhora (English term being Xhora) located between the Mbhashe river all the way up to Umtata in the Eastern Cape Province of Southern Africa (see figure 1 below):

Sharing about the study site is not to follow the tendency of unravelling stereotypes about rural areas. Ocholla (2007) brings forth that, stereotypes fuelling marginalisation of IK relate to the tendency to associate IK with traditional communities thereby focusing on the poor developing countries when doing studies on IK. Ocholla questions the problematic nature of these studies by raising whether they are done to improve the welfare of communities or are they to simply show such communities as struggling, poor, having hard problematic lives which further demeans the Indigenous communities and reveals the stereotypes. I share details of the study site through an appreciative lens which focuses on how well the communities live and solve problems using their IK and methods, not to pin point the wrongs.

Sharing an in-depth description of the context also assists to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives in relation to their context. This is a window through which outsiders can learn to appreciate what is happening in Xhora. I was an outsider myself and my effort to understand the life of Xhora through living and engaging in some village life was a process stretching well into the data collection stages. This understanding helped me to clear any assumptions, misconceptions and stereotypes. It also facilitated respectful relationships as well as better understanding the data. It is with this reason that I present this section with a focus on the realities of life in Xhora.



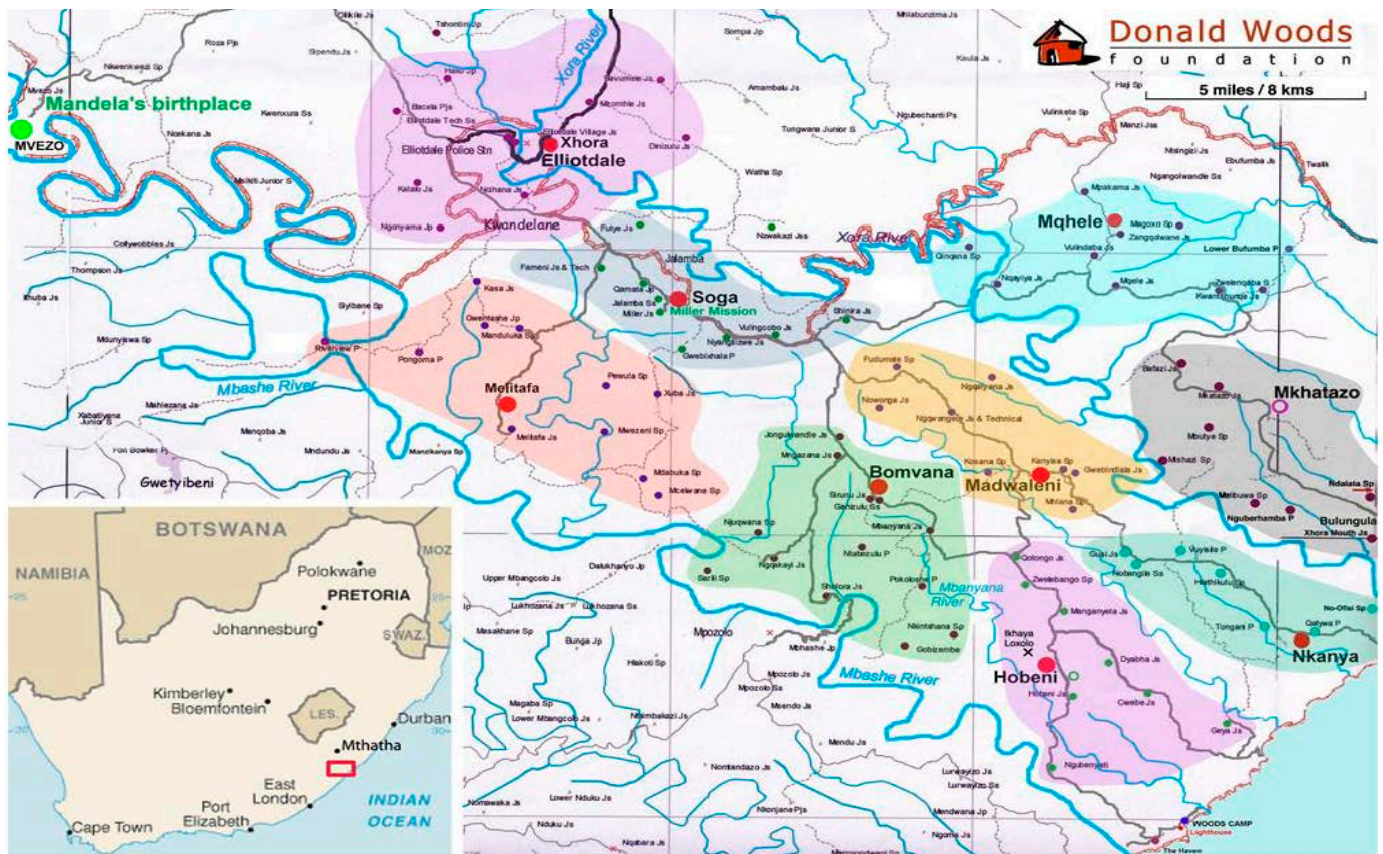


Figure 1: The study setting- Xhora, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa (Mji 2012)

Xhora is situated within Amathole district municipality which is a category C municipality with municipalities such as Mbhashe, Mquma, great Kei, Amahlathini, Ngqushwa and Raymond Mhlaba falling under its jurisdiction. Xhora falls under the Mbhashe municipality. The town of Xhora lies 50 km South of Umthata and 22 km South-East of Mqanduli. As depicted in Figure 1 above, the differently coloured surroundings with red dots indicate the eight different clusters of villages within Xhora namely; Xhora which is the town, and next to the town are two clusters called Soga and Melitafa; in the middle of Xhora, there are three clusters called Bomvana, Madwaleni (where the Madwaleni hospital is positioned) and Mqhele; lastly closer to the sea, there are also two clusters called Hobeni and Nkanya with Nkanya being the furthest and is along the sea. All these clusters have clinics (with each clinic named after the name of the village). I have focused on only four clusters of villages for this study namely; Nkanya, Hobeni, Madwaleni and Xhora. Being part of these villages was therapeutic on its own with beautiful views and pure non-polluted air. Figure 2 below aims to give a snapshot of these villages' beauty:

### Early morning views from Hobeni



### Sea views from Nkanya



Figure 2: Snapshots of the villages showcasing the beautiful breath-taking views

The area had beautiful weather even during winter and seems to be so throughout the year as it occupies space along the Indian ocean with hilly villages and lots of green beautiful forest (See figure 3 below). Below are some key aspects of the people of Xhora.



## THE BEAUTIFUL HILLY GREEN VILLAGES AND THE SEAVIEW



Figure 3: The sight of the beautiful villages with hills, the green forests and the sea

### *Tribe and Education*

The people who reside here are called AmaBomvane. They speak Nguni-Xhosa, a Bantu language spoken by more than 3.9 million South Africans. Their language is an important aspect that underpins their identity among the Xhosa in general. While pure isiXhosa would refer to a rand as 'ishumi', they on the other hand refer to it as 'itshumi'. The breakdown of their tribal economy forced the traditional Bomvana towards the turmoil of rapid cultural change. This process of acculturation in South Africa (SA), which affected thousands of Africans to mainly work as labourers in the mines of SA was orchestrated mainly by the industrial powers. In Mbomvanaland, education managed to polarise the AmaBomvane into two groups:

- a) The 'red' illiterate people (Amaqaba = people who paint themselves with red ochre and are classified as traditionalists). There are people in the area who have chosen not to go to formal schooling as they felt it does not represent their realities. A majority of the older people in Xhora have no formal education at all and are not ashamed of this status; and
- b) The 'school' people (Amaqhobhoka = people who have left traditional life and are usually Christians and to some degree are westernised (Gessler, Msuya & Nkunya 1995 cited in Mji 2012).



There are a number of primary and high schools (+/- 20 schools in total) and one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college which is located in Madwaleni.

### *Socio-economic position of the tribe*

The Bomvana are pastoralists and agriculturists. Their economy is interwoven with social and religious life. The possession of land and cattle, for example, is necessary for full participation in the social and religious life of the tribe. They mostly use goats and cows for rituals but also possess horses and donkeys (which are used for transport), and sheep and pigs. They also value land and cattle for sustaining their livelihood such as using cattle to work their land in preparation for food production; they use horses/ cattle/ donkeys to fetch water from the river and to pull wood. In this process, their people learn to help themselves and provide for themselves and their families. The villages closer to town have less livestock and have more or less adopted the urban-like lifestyle with electricity and water nearby and cooking indoors on a stove.

### Stock



Figure 4: The availability of livestock as a resource for livelihoods

Therefore, land, stock and nature are central to their everyday lives and important resources for their way of living (See figures 4 and 5). However, these communities continue to face difficulties especially with regards to land and natural resources rights. Such evidence indicated the systemic struggles facing Indigenous groups particularly where through loss of

land and natural resources, they are no longer able to maintain traditional livelihoods and sustain culture, knowledge, and institutions.

## USING NATURE AS A RESOURCE FOR LIVING



Figure 5: Snapshots of their critical resources for living

The density of cattle in Bomvanaland had been the highest in the whole of the ‘old’ Transkei prior to dispossession. However, today many families live below the poverty line, and migratory practices have eroded the stability and backbone of family units as well as successfully eliminated the socio-economic development level of their homelands (Mji 2012).

The villages closer to the sea are still staunch in their own ways including using wood to make fire outside, fetching water from the river as they do not have taps and electricity. The difference here is that the day seems shorter as activity starts very early so that by sunset (before it gets dark) they have covered all their activities whereas in the closer to town villages, the day is long.

### *Distance*

Distance is one of the characteristics that distinguish rural from urban areas. The apartheid geographic infrastructure still prevails as maintained by the African National Congress (ANC) policies. Residents of rural areas continually have to negotiate distances to schools, clinics, to sources of water and firewood. For instance, in Nkanya, I observed that there is no

school close to most of homes. Consequently, children must cross a river and walk long distances to access schooling. In many cases, these children end up starting school at a later age (delayed) as parents often do not feel they can allow their young ones to walk and cross rivers. Some end up dropping out due to these distances and prejudices resulting from being the few older ones (in terms of age) in early grades than their majority peers. Some parts of the villages are very far from clinics too. Distance is also one of the factors that discourages many people from living, working, and doing research in rural contexts. A feature of the colonial period, terms such as underdeveloped, backward, primitive, and worse are regularly applied by health and education professionals working in these communities.

During rainy seasons, rivers are flooded, and residents cannot cross to get to school, clinics or to town. The roads get all muddy with vehicles getting stuck. Most of the teachers in their schools reside in Umtata so they commute daily, however, in some villages, in rainy seasons, roads get damaged and it is difficult to navigate in the muddy gravel tiny roads thus delaying services.

#### *Rituals, traditions and ancestors*

AmaBomvane, when they describe themselves they say that they are a people of amasiko nezithethe (tradition and custom) and every Bomvane goes through these in a specific age and stage of their lives. They also see themselves as totally dependent upon their own ancestors for guidance in all the vital aspects of life and their being. According to the Bomvanes, a belief in God is critical to their wellness. Their relationship with God highlighted that, although there is a misconception that Xhosa people worship their ancestors, that is not the case. They revere their ancestors, who are the link between God and the living; they are the intermediaries between God and those who are still alive. Their ancestral connection assists when their health strategies are not working, they come in the form of a dream instructing them where they might find the correct herb for a sick person. The relationship with ancestral life in Bomvanaland is the ultimate concern to which all social aspects of life can be referred. It is not only a social phenomenon; it is a religion, but a religion of great social importance (Mji 2012).

#### **4. Locating the case into broader scholarship**

Given the problem identified by this study, one of the solutions has been the calls to indigenise and decolonise education. This study was interested in understanding this disconnect from the perspectives of Indigenous people as well as exploring potential relevance of IKs in addressing the resulting disconnect and alienability of education which is documented widely. Much of IKS advocacy work which has been vehemently argued for by several scholars includes the incorporation of IKS into the school curriculum and/or formal education (Breidlid 2004; Hountonji 2002; Horshemke 2004; Le Grange 2004, 2007; Le Roux 2004; Ntuli 2002; Odora-Hoppers 2002; Onwu & Mosimege 2004). These calls follow a long history of exclusion of knowledge production from the formerly colonised, historically marginalised and oppressed groups' knowledge systems. A history which has promoted the production of knowledge that is constructed only through the Western gaze (Chilisa 2012). When reviewing various studies on IKS, what is evident are threads of constructivism (Le Grange 2004, 2007; Ogunniyi 2004; Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009). In the last few decades, debates about IK increased worldwide arguing from both human rights and social justice perspectives (Khupe 2014; Odora-Hoppers 2002) while others argued from a pedagogical lens (Aikenhead 1996).

Currently existing published work on IKS and the curriculum integration question by multiculturalists, postmodernists, critical pedagogues and others (see for example, Agrawal 1995; Bala & Joseph 2007; Freire 1970; Fensham, Gunstone & White 1994; Giroux 1988; Hall 1996; Semali 1999; Snively & Corsiglia 2001) indicates a response to many factors. In South Africa specifically, advocacy for inclusion of IKS into formal education has been prompted by at least five major factors, namely:

- a political ideological imperative to correct past and current injustices, imbalances and inequities of colonial and apartheid education (Loubser 2005; Masoga 2005; Nel 2005);
- multiculturalism influences raising debates about universalism and pluralism (Le Grange, 2004, 2007; Ogunniyi 2004);
- beliefs related to IKS not being only culturally significant, valid and valuable knowledge but also relevant and useful for sustainable development of both humans and the environment (Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009);
- cultural border crossing and collateral learning (Aikehead & Jegede 1999; Jegede & Okebukola 1991; Ogawa 1986;); and

- a decoloniality call to delink from, and break down systems that reinforce the colonial administration and imperialism (Mignolo 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

These rationales provide the impetus for both policy and curriculum change and reform in South Africa. They also call for a need to rethink the processes of knowledge production and devote attention to epistemologies and methodologies that centre on Africa. The Indigenous research paradigm provided space for this rethinking process with an aim to reconstruct a body of knowledge which promotes transformation and social change among the historically oppressed (Chilisa 2012). Its knowledge system is built on relations with a research purpose that takes the vantage point of challenging the deficit thinking and pathological descriptions of the colonised Indigenous people. I thus strongly located the study within the scholarship of IKS. I also borrowed from decolonial and postcolonial theories to call for reconceptualization of education systems in ways that respond effectively to the disconnect which translates to health disparities among Indigenous people. It was thus important for me to choose the IKS paradigm as informed by the resistance to Euro-Western thought and the need for Indigenous people to appropriate their own knowledges (Chilisa 2012).

The strength of the IKS research, as posited by Chilisa (2012), lies in being respectful and inclusive of all knowledges in the following four ways:

- Instead of using Western theory, it targets local phenomena to define a research issue. This is evident in how this study was developed as well.
- It is context sensitive and creates locally relevant methods, constructs and theories derived from local experiences. This will be showcased in the methodological approach of this study.
- It can be integrative thus allowing for a combination of Western and Indigenous theories while still remaining respectful and resisting the normalised positions of dominance.
- Lastly, it has assumptions informed by the Indigenous paradigm and these assumptions guide the research process accordingly (Chilisa 2012).

This study therefore centred on the concerns of Indigenous people and created a space of conversations through their own frame of reference. Equally important is that the focus of the study was not only to inform further research activities and accumulation of a body of literature in shelves but that it had to be beneficial to the people.



## 5. Situating this study case within an area of scholarship

Literature in South Africa reveals that IKS research has been a multidisciplinary inquiry encompassing academic fields ranging from religion and history, sciences and mathematics, to education and health systems (Mubangizi & Kaya 2015; Nel 2005; Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009). Interdisciplinary studies as an emerging school of thought serves as an alternative to the traditional disciplinary specific studies. A basic dictionary and google search defines ‘Interdisciplinary’ as “involving”, “drawing from”, “combining of”, “relating to” or “characterised by” two or more disciplines. Though it is not easy to define interdisciplinarity, some posit that it consists of integration of two or more theories across disciplinary boundaries (Bertalanffy 1968) leading to interaction and collaboration that extends to joint activities and shared responsibility. The emerging approach of IK research evolving from relatively participatory approaches is a promising context in which to advance interdisciplinary research (Sillitoe 2004). Facilitating IK research in an interdisciplinary approach is best suited since IK is inherently holistic in perspective. Thus, IK can be positioned as an ideal pioneer and engine for interdisciplinary research. However, I am aware that being involved in indigenist, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research may present both problems and opportunities for IKS in the academy.

Institutions of learning have not made much progress towards an education system that is accessible to Indigenous people as researchers in their own right. In South Africa, Universities of KwaZulu-Natal, North-West, Venda, UNISA, UFS and UNIZULU have thus far initiated programmatic initiatives in their efforts to integrate African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) into their core business, that is, research, teaching and community engagement (Kaya 2013). However it is worth noting that in curricula and disciplinary knowledge where IK content is added, it is often through add-on programme innovations, much like added to pre-existing treaty enforced to the advantage of the coloniser. As a result, this approach maintains the IK-science divide and duality of knowledges. This study moved beyond the disciplinarity and considered knowledge practices and methodologies which formal institutions of learning never fully understand nor integrate. This same approach and experience was sustained through an ongoing relationship with the elders of Xhora as custodians and experts throughout this research. This was enriched through dialogues with elders from community entry to the finalisation of research as part of

indigenising and decolonising research. Respecting and recognising the ways of AmaBomvane formed a huge part of the ethical guidelines met by this study. I elaborate further on this in chapter 5 of this thesis.

In this study, I was concerned with the knowledges produced and practised by Indigenous people in rural Xhora which can be engaged with at all levels of the academy for purposes of maintaining positive health and well-being. I was also concerned about how institutions of learning can begin to service humanity and/or life instead of life serving institutions. In this regard, harmonious coexistence precedes the paradigm of growth. Borrowing from decoloniality, this study advocated that all knowledges be given spaces to avoid displacement and appropriation rooted in European fundamentalism (Higgs 2016; Higgs 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Odora-Hoppers 2001; Ramose 2003; Santos, Nunes & Meneses 2007). Not only does IK research see disciplinary boundaries becoming increasingly penetrable or even breaking down, but also advocates that we begin to rethink in manners that transcend disciplinary boundaries. Lastly, the study envisaged that its findings will encourage disciplines to be more open to alternative ways and/or other domains of knowing and doing research. This is of importance considering that research is not just an innocent neutral academic exercise but an activity carrying a set of ideological, political and social frameworks which are still mostly dominated by euro-centric prejudices (Hountondji 2002).

## **6. Unpacking key study concepts: definition of terms**

Some of the key terms used in this study are construed differently by many people. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will apply.

### *Who are Indigenous people?*

Drawing from Semali & Kincheloe (1999) and Smith (1999) as Indigenous scholars, when I speak about Indigenous people, I speak “within the context of people’s colonial relations with European conquerors and modern attempts at economic, political and cultural restructuring” (Smith 1999:7). I speak about a dynamic construct that includes networks of people who have been subjected to colonisation of their lands and cultures (Smith 1999) thus leading to cultural identities that have been shaped and reshaped by colonisation (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). Such land colonisation prevents Indigenous people from living according to their own practices. However, neither colonisation or socio-economic disadvantage is the most defining element of indigeneity. As Durie (2004) writes, it is important to acknowledge that the most

significant characteristic for defining indigeneity stems from the strong sense of unity with the environment. People are the land, land is the people. Included in this term are “elders, parents, and neighbours teach[ing] and learn[ing] traditions that emphasise staying well rooted; strengthening the knowledge and skills needed to nourish and be nourished by their own places” (Prakash & Esteva 1998:3).

### *IKS, IK and Western knowledge*

The association of IK with many constructs such as community knowledge, rural people’s knowledge, folklore expressions, cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, has made it difficult for IKS scholars to reach a consensus definition of IK (Ngulube & Lwoga 2007). This may be attributed to the complexity of IK as many issues come to the fore when trying to unpack it. The first issue is related to contestations over what should constitute as Indigenous exacerbated by terms like traditional, native, African or Black and the opposite of European being conflated with Indigenous (Loubser 2005). The second issue relates to what is to be counted as knowledge (Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009). Lastly, the fact that literature often uses the terms IK and IKS with the allusion that they mean the same thing adds to these complexities (Loubser 2005; Ogunniyi 2007). What then should we mean by IK and IKS?

For the purpose of this study, IK is, in simple terms, knowledge that is local, specific to place and is synonymous to ways of knowing, in languages where verbs are more central than nouns (Aikenhead 1996; Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Vhurumuku & Mokeleche 2009). It is a dynamic way in which people of an area come to understand themselves in relationship with their natural environment and how they organise that folk knowledge, cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives (Semali and Kincheloe 1999). One can conclude that IK shapes the identity of Indigenous people. This being (identity) guides what people do to navigate life and sustain themselves. It also guides their becoming and belonging in a social context.

IKS refers to the totality of knowledge held by communities in which IK is entangled and stored. This is to say, this holistic cultural matrix including an understanding of science, life and also encompassing an individual’s worldview is called ‘IKS’ (Bredlid 2004). A worldview is a collection of beliefs and values which provide a reference point for individuals and groups to make sense of their world (Liu & Lederman 2007). With its origins in oral cultures, IK abides in the hearts and minds of older people and specialists’ as



knowledge custodians and carriers in particular areas. Those who possess the knowledge do not necessarily look to publishing it as compared to Western knowledge and IK does not only lie in the hands of an individual. It is carried and produced collectively. In many cases, the knowledge is regarded as a heritage to be passed on for practical and survival purposes. Additionally, IK is a way of living in nature (Aikenhead 1996) and is not easily amenable to categorisation. This is to say, these are different sources of knowledge and methods of teaching and learning existing within the cultural, social, ecological and epistemological contexts of local communities. IK consists of “different world views and alternative ways of coming to know, and of being” (Smith, 1999:74). It is constructed from people’s cognitive and sagacious legacy, which result from an interaction with their nature in a common locality (Maurial in Semali & Kincheloe 1999).

Both IKS and Western knowledges are contentious constructs associated with diverse characterisations. As such, while Western knowledge is described as a universal knowledge, IKS is described as complex, dynamic, local and multifaceted. A differentiating feature of IK from the hegemonic Westernised knowledge lies in its nature not to seek universal application, because of its strong connection with place (context). Different communities can therefore have different knowledges, and this influences standardisation.

### *Formal schooling*

Formal schooling in the Western sense is a phenomenon that was introduced to many Indigenous peoples at about the same time that their territories were colonised by Western powers. Anciently, in traditional African societies, education was meant to equip young people for their gender-specific roles in society (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2003; Khupe 2014). Modern schooling among Indigenous people came largely through Christian missionaries in pre-apartheid South Africa. Though the missionaries’ education was largely seen as intended for good, critics have pointed out how missionary education, through its displacement of local ways of knowing and living as well as local forms of education, subtly introduced an attitude of inferiority to Indigenous people (Christie 1991; Khupe 2014; Molteno 1984).

### *Education*

The term education is open to different interpretations. This study holds the position that education goes beyond the coloniser’s thoughts of equating education with schooling. It has long been argued that education transcends schooling to including happenings outside the colonial school system (Bond 1982). It is an essential aspect of human societies and thus

should not be narrowly defined. For the purpose of this study, education is a means of knowing about ourselves, others and worlds around us (Ngugi wa Thongo 2005). While the ‘means’ is used in the context of a vehicle, knowing oneself, others and the world through a process of a continuous becoming presents the ‘ends’ aspect of education. This suggests being, knowing and doing as inseparable in education thus recognising the means-ends notion of education. The position held by this study contends that gaining a profound understanding of ourselves is critical if we are to better rethink the education of the future (that is transform education systems). Furthermore, and in the context of the colonised, such a standpoint carries an ontological and epistemological dialectic. What this dialectic means is that what we know influences what appears as reality and who we are influences what we know. This relationship influences the everyday doings (praxis). In this regard, exploring and describing who we are and what we know from the voices of those who have been marginalised in knowledge production is a critical step towards enacting transformation and protecting our epistemic freedom. It is for this reason that education encompasses a holistic and lifelong human learning process within which knowledge is generated and passed from one generation to another in a given society (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2003). The study calls for an education that centres on Africa and its contribution is to how we see and understand ourselves – that is, focusing on building positive and healthy identities given the history of South Africa. In suggesting this, I am not rejecting nor replacing other streams especially the Western stream of education. However, as Nyerere (1967:1) further elaborates,

education, whether it be formal or informal, has a purpose. That purpose is to transmit from one generation to another the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young people for the future membership of society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.

This is to say, education must be for liberation or emancipation of Indigenous people and an enhancer of lives. This is the general purpose of education in societies which are not oppressed.

### *Health and well-being*

In a study by Mji (2012) on Indigenous Health Knowledge in response to health problems they manage at home in Xhora (a rural area in the Eastern Cape), the older women criticised the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) definition of health as having left out critical determinants of health. This WHO’s definition refers to health as, “A state of complete

physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO 1948 cited in Mji 2012). Mji’s study findings critiqued this definition for unintentionally contributing to the medicalisation of the health and well-being of a society. Boneham and Sixsmith (2005) maintain that the voices of Indigenous older women are rarely heard in debates about health. Using their IK stance, the older people in Mji’s study expanded the definition to a wellness and living conditions perspective. This perspective sees health as a balance between having peace, food security, happiness, security in the villages as well as being actively engaged in key activities and functions of their villages. These functions contribute to health and well-being as well as progress in society. In this definition, well-being is linked to the ability to fulfil cultural roles and function in dignified and meaningful ways with or without symptoms. This definition also suggests health as a reserve for living. Such a definition challenges the biomedical model of human illness which says you are ill because of bugs or chemistry. Rather illness becomes understood as resulting from the body-environment (understood broadly as both the natural and social environment) interaction (Green 2008). It may be the case that symptoms removal is less important than simply being well. It becomes clear that people’s alienation from their natural environment which makes up their identity as well as the reduction of plant knowledge to pills fosters alienation experiences which produce and exacerbate illness (Green 2008). Essentially, it is a combination of relationships that contribute to the health and well-being of Indigenous people.

## **7. Aim, research questions and objectives of the study**

The primary aim of this study was to explore and describe the potential relevance of IKs in transforming the formal education system for better health and well-being.

The study was premised on the following key research questions:

- How do the AmaBomvane rural people experience the influence of the formal education system on their indigenous traditions and knowledges and their links to health and well-being?
- What do stakeholders (elders, youth and teachers) identify as some of the indigenous knowledge and ways of teaching and learning in these communities?

- In what ways can the indigenous knowledges and teaching and learning strategies of the AmaBomvane inform curriculum development and implementation in the formal schooling system?

The objectives of the study included:

- describing AmaBomvane's rural experience of the influence of the formal education system on their Indigenous traditions and knowledges and their links to health and well-being.
- exploring what stakeholders (elders, youth and teachers) identify as some of the Indigenous knowledges and ways of teaching and learning in these communities.
- exploring how the identified knowledges and teaching and learning strategies of AmaBomvane can inform curriculum development and implementation in the formal schooling system.

## **8. Outline of the thesis chapters**

**Chapter 1** outlines the focus of the study and contextual background on the purpose of the study. Central research questions, aims and objectives are outlined.

**Chapter 2, 3 and 4** map the terrain of this enquiry as the rationale for conducting this study. These chapters revisit the ugly past and reflect on the undesirable present to re-imagine a desirable future. Chapter 2 discusses the health and well-being status of Indigenous people globally and unpacks broader factors contributing to the health disparities facing Indigenous people. Chapter 3 reviews the epistemic crisis followed by a description of Indigenous education with its characteristics. Chapter 4 reviews the South African education system highlighting how it has continued to perpetuate the decimation of IKs while being based on a modernist perspective of learning thus creating broken cultural identities of Indigenous people.

**Chapter 5** outlines the Indigenous methodological steps taken in this study. The selected research method, approach and design of the study is discussed in depth. I further discuss strategies employed to collect, analyse, and ensure quality and rigorous data. I conclude with an outline of how the study ensured adherence to ethical standards.

**Chapter 6** presents the case of narratives as study findings aimed at answering the main aim and research questions of the study. This chapter narrates the stories of all sampled participants.

**Chapter 7** responds to the specific study questions by discussing the narratives of AmaBomvane and reflecting on current literature.

**Chapter 8** concludes the study with a precis of the study. I also present key ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiology reflections as well as study limitations and recommendations for future studies.

## **Chapter 2: Health and well-being of Indigenous people**

## Introduction

This chapter describes the health status and well-being status of Indigenous people worldwide and in South Africa. I later focus on the causes of the health inequities facing Indigenous people using studies on Indigenous people in different contexts. I conclude by bringing an occupation-centred understanding of health and well-being of Indigenous people.

### 1. The health status of Indigenous people

Worldwide, in low, middle and high-income countries, Indigenous people remain on the margins of society bearing a disproportionate burden of poverty, disease, disability, and mortality compared to the general population (Anderson et al. 2016; Gracey & King 2009; Hernandez et al. 2017; King, Kirmayer & Brass 2016; King, Smith & Gracey 2009; Mitrou et al. 2014; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2015; Valleggia & Snodgrass 2015). Despite the scarcity of recognition of the Indigenous identity and data on Indigenous people, Anderson et al. (2016) documented in the Lancet significant disparities among 28 Indigenous populations from 23 countries. This study showed disparities between Indigenous and general populations on several variables such as maternal and infant mortality, life expectancy at birth, nutrition (child malnutrition, childhood and adulthood obesity), frequency of low and high birth weight in infants and key social indicators (education attainment and economic status) (Anderson et al. 2016). Earlier, Gracey and King (2009) also reported that some Indigenous groups are rapidly acquiring lifestyle diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, physical, social and mental disorders, obesity and cardiovascular disease, linked to misuse of alcohol and of other drugs, as they move between traditional, transitional and modern ways of living.

Similar findings were presented by Durie (2004) when writing about Maoris in New Zealand. Durie further stated that Indigenous populations are far worse off than non-Indigenous neighbours in almost all social well-being indicators, whether its educational achievement, standard of housing, income levels, unemployment or lifestyle risks. Various authors in the 2006, 2009 and 2016 Lancet series articles discuss extensively that the health status of dispossessed people has significant disparities compared to people who own and control land (Anderson et al. 2016; Gracey & King 2009; King et al. 2009; Ohenjo et al. 2006). Despite the overall improvement of health outcomes related to the Millennium Development Goals 15-year-push, the persistence of these inequalities remains and has even worsened in some countries (Heineke & Edwards 2012; Kabeer 2010). The worsening status is of no surprise

considering that inequalities are systematically worsening, as Ohenjo et al. (2006) argued, in contexts where loss of natural resources and land results in an inability to sustain traditional livelihoods, culture, knowledge and institutions of knowledge production. It can thus be argued that losing crucial aspects of one's identity results in a negative impact on Indigenous peoples' health.

King, Smith & Gracey (2009) posit that the colonisation of Indigenous people is a fundamental health determinant which continues to impact the health and well-being of the colonised. In Africa for instance, many Indigenous communities were split during the scramble for Africa and the development of colonial borders towards the end of the nineteenth century. King and co-authors reflect that concepts associated with and used to refer to Indigenous people such as backwardness and primitivism remain a feature of the colonial period. This colonising process coupled with prevalent prejudices and negative stereotypes, has often created conflicting identities among Indigenous people. Along with being increasingly marginalised and discriminated against, Indigenous people were dispossessed of their land and natural resources resulting in impoverishment and threats to their culture and survival (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights 2005).

In cases where Indigenous people are recognised, Ohenjo and co-authors (2006) posit that they often face conflicting perspectives on their way of life. The conflict stems from paternalistic approaches which force Indigenous people in many rural African contexts to be modernised and fit into the dominant society. Both the lack of recognition of an Indigenous identity in health reviews and these paternalistic approaches result in health policies, practices, systems and structures that reproduce the same discrimination and oppression of Indigenous peoples.

In South Africa, the picture is similar with a high burden of premature mortality and marked health inequities resulting from social inequities as reported in the 2017 South African Health Review by Vera Scott and co-authors (2017). Similarly, Massyn and co-authors (2015) reported in the 2014/2015 South African Health Review estimates of infant mortality rate (IMR) from the 2011 Census in the predominantly rural Eastern Cape Province as 40.3 per 1 000 live births – doubling that of the urban Western Cape which had an IMR of 20.4 per 1 000 live births (Massyn et al. 2015; Scott et al. 2017). These significant urban and rural differences were also reported within provinces. For example, the maternal mortality in facility ratio was '56 per 100 000 live births in urban Cape Town and 371 per 100 000 live



births in the rural district of the Central Karoo' within the same province (Massyn et al. 2015 cited in Scott et al. 2017).

What was recognised as a quadruple burden of disease in 1994, affecting the landless Indigenous people continues to lead the causes of mortality, lost years of healthy life and disability in South Africa today. A quadruple burden of disease was recognised as 1) diseases of poverty, 2) non-communicable diseases, 3) HIV/AIDS (communicable disease), and 4) violence and injury (Coovadia et al. 2009; Mayosi et al. 2012). Twenty-four years post-apartheid, South Africa remains with major HIV (15.5%) and tuberculosis (TB) (12.4%) epidemics, higher than the global average maternal and child mortality levels, a rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and increased levels of injuries and violence (Massyn et al. 2015; Scott et al. 2017). Available data is weak on this aspect of recognising indigeneity thus presenting more problems for Indigenous people as well as towards gathering evidence about Indigenous health.

Despite this lack of data, I argue that it is mostly Indigenous people who are blighted by this ill health as they are the ones who are subjugated to poor and disabling living conditions through the migrant labour system following different levels of land dispossession. Gracey and King (2009:68) made a similar argument by stating that "Indigenous people have much higher rates of infection than their non-Indigenous counterparts, and these infections are likely to be more severe or more frequently fatal in Indigenous groups" due to late identification and health systems that are usually scarce, far and in conflict with healing ways of Indigenous communities. For instance, authors in other parts of the world argue that HIV/AIDS was called "the first postmodern pandemic" with its infection being a continuous health crisis for racial and ethnic minorities, including Indigenous people (Cargill & Stone 2005; Kallings 2008;). I will make a few examples to illustrate this argument.

Firstly, colonial subjugation and apartheid dispossession opened windows for a migrant labour system that led to the destruction of family life, broken homes, vast income inequalities and extreme forms of violence which all formed colliding epidemics of illness and disease in SA. People who were subjugated violently from their lands and resources were separated from their families and forced to work in hard labour for low wages. They worked and lived in poorly ventilated and overcrowded conditions thus exposing them to higher rates of communicable diseases like tuberculosis (TB), a second leading cause of premature mortality in South Africa. The history of TB includes that it started spreading as miners

became too ill to be productive considering the conditions they were working in. Since the 1920s, the majority of adults in what was referred to as Transkei and Ciskei became infected with TB (Coovadia et al. 2009). Apartheid further consolidated this and those who were left behind inhabiting what was known as the Bantustans were limited to young people, elderly, sick or disabled, and mostly women who were unemployed. All these events led to the four colliding epidemics (quadruple burden) which were only recognised from 1994 as already explained above. Poverty deepened as migrant labour intensified and children-led families increased thus further undermining family life. The finding that a pre-1994 epidemiologist ignored conducting studies in peri-urban and rural communities that were mainly inhabited by Black people compounded the issue (Katzenellebogen, Joubert & Abdool- Karim 1997). These social dynamics and working conditions are similarly linked to land dispossession and migrant labour which are both factors of production of racial capitalism.

Today, the struggle to produce food in rural areas and pressure to fit into the dominant modernised society continues to coerce migration among both men and women to urban areas for this hard labour. Later, children also follow. Due to displacement and migrant labour, overcrowding and unsanitary informal settlements, from birth people face key health challenges including maternal mortality, malnutrition, TB, HIV/AIDS, stress, poor diets and living conditions leading to several diseases and teenage pregnancy (Coovadia et al. 2009; Mayosi et al. 2012). The overcrowding and poorly ventilated structures as a result of poor housing, poor diets and HIV remain cited as major contributors to the burden of disease (Scott et al. 2017).

Secondly, as Ohenjo et al. (2006) write, when deprived of opportunities for cultural expression and endorsement, enslaved people experience hostility which gives rise to explosive behaviour such as the above-mentioned violence and injury under the influence of alcohol. A feature noted in many dispossessed contexts, Ohenjo and co-authors further report that loss of land and livelihood resources has increased alcohol consumption among Indigenous people. As a result, their study found that alcohol consumption is no longer primarily for pleasure on the landless peoples rather its use serves as an analgesic for both physical and existential pain (Ohenjo et al. 2006). This has in turn contributed to increased levels of violence in households and communities as recognised in SA and other African countries (Cloete & Ramugondo 2012; Ohenjo et al. 2006). Deprived of their traditional livelihoods and resources, forced modernisation and labour for income in order to sustain livelihoods, “women have gradually also lost their traditionally equal status with men”

(Ohenjo et al. 2010: 1943). Excessive alcohol consumption plays a major part in gender violence, a trend noted to be increasing among young people (Gracey & King 2009; Ohenjo et al. 2006). This problem is noticeable in many dispossessed contexts everywhere.

Ultimately, this becomes a problem of poverty which stems from the loss of land and livelihoods without a viable alternative. Many reviews, such as the South African Health Review, fail to link these health inequities to dispossession and colonial subjugation.

Thirdly, South Africa has a rise of obesity of which 31% of men and 64% of women fall into the categories of obese and overweight as per the results of the 2012 South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (Scott et al. 2017). Obesity is an important contributing factor to the rise in NCDs as illness increases with increases in weight. With landless people being deprived of their traditional livelihoods, Scott and co-authors (2017) reveal that access to food is mainly being facilitated by supermarkets which account for an increasing proportion of purchased food. It is clear that this colonial control was enabled by expropriation of land from Indigenous people. The food purchased by landless people is influenced by costing as whole and fresh foods are more costly and thus less accessible than processed foods when compared on both an energy and weight basis. Ultimately, landlessness underpins the swing of reliance on supermarket processed and packaged foods that are more salty, fatty and sugary compared to home-produced natural foods on undamaged lands.

In South Africa, Scott et al. (2017) note that owners of land dominate the food value chain – agricultural inputs, farm production, food processing and manufacture, and retail. The low socio-economic status of landless people, because of exclusion and displacement from their lands, also means that their lives are continuously shaped and reshaped by the structural and socio-political factors beyond their control. It can therefore be argued that land dispossession, as a feature of colonisation, has significantly threatened peoples' livelihoods and food security, thus contributing to the cited burden of disease and lives adjusted to disability. Equally important, these factors influence the health inequities and the intersecting disabling conditions of poverty as we witness them.

What is revealed in the above scenarios is the problematic and violent nature of the modernity project which has created Indigenous people as subjugated objects for labour; in contrast to the dominant narrative which regards Indigenous people as problems with no agency to lead healthy lives. Indigenous people are subjected to environments that are

increasingly inhumane. Not only have they faced epistemicide (the destruction of IK structures) and genocide (killing of populations of people through the quadruple burden of disease), but as part of the modern project of creating one state, a new identity has created further problems for Indigenous people (Grosfoguel 2011,2013; Mignolo 2009). The displacement and killings of many Indigenous midwives and healers accused of practising witchcraft is an example of both epistemicide and genocide. For the purpose of this study, I question the role of formal education in emancipating Indigenous people who had lost their lands, voices, dignity, culture and knowledge for better health and well-being. Indigenous culture has been significantly and positively associated with physical health, social and emotional well-being, and with a reduction of risk-taking behaviours in a review done in Australia, Canada, United States and New Zealand (Bourke et al. 2018). Given the increasing worldwide recognition that cultures of Indigenous people positively influence their health and well-being (Burgess et al. 2008; Burgess et al. 2009; Chandler & Lalonde 1998; 2008, Chandler et al. 2003; Dockery 2009, 2011; Hallett, Chandler & Lalonde 2007), a particular interest relates to what cultures are coming through the formal education system and how are these influencing Indigenous people's health and well-being?

I now elaborate on this displacement as one cause for health inequities among Indigenous people.

## **2. Understanding causes of health inequities among Indigenous people**

It could be argued that losing land has meant losing a primary reason for living among Indigenous people. Upon reflection about the Maoris, Durie (2004;2005) posits that, to Indigenous people, 'people are the land and land is the people'. Any breakdown of unity with environments thus brings negative health to Indigenous people. The following are some of the causes of health inequities among others not necessarily mentioned in this current study.

### ***2.1 Identity and health***

Isolation from identity is a common issue facing Indigenous people worldwide (Nettleton, Napolitano and Stephens 2007). Identity is linked to Indigenous health. The primary characteristic of Indigenous people is their inseparable connection with the environment which has developed over centuries (Durie 2005). This relationship is celebrated in custom and group interaction and gives rise to a system of knowledge which generates a distinctive

environmental ethic framework (Durie 2004; 2005). Durie further states that applying this framework facilitates balanced environmentally sustainable economic growth. As argued above, Indigenous economies have often been undermined by colonisation depending on varying degrees of dispossession, different health and education experiences and diverse political relations (Kunitz 1994). It can thus be argued that disruption of this environmental relationship by the colonial experience has had devastating health effects (Durie 2004; 2005). The relationship between people belonging to their own community, land and animals essentially forms part of an Indigenous person's cultural identity (King et al. 2009).

This feature is mirrored in knowledge systems and societal practices thus bringing the collective experience of identity within Indigenous contexts. This cultural identity is not only dependent on people's access to their culture and heritage but also on their ability to express and endorse their culture in society's institutions and practices (Durie, Milroy & Hunter 2009). Denied the opportunities for cultural expression and endorsement, Indigenous people thus experience hostility which gives rise to explosive behaviour such as the above-mentioned violence and injury under the influence of alcohol (King et al. 2009).

Additionally, the structural and systemic factors which damage Indigenous ways of life and disintegrate Indigenous families continuously give rise to a loss of positive Indigenous role models (Durie, Milroy & Hunter 2009). This in turn exacerbates the challenge towards reclaiming positive Indigenous identities. This also poses problems to building healthy identities that are not characterised with burden of disease, poverty and discrimination. A critical question to ask is what is the role of formal schooling in restoring and reimagining the disintegrated environmental relationship and identities.

## *2.2 Disruption of the inseparable connection with land*

Another health determinant is the disruption of the inseparable connection Indigenous people have with land, thus destroying practices and participation in key activities which are deemed important for health and well-being. The displacement of people from their own environments continues to position Indigenous people worldwide on the margins of society. This is because the displacement leads to a breakdown of what Durie (2004) calls the element of inseparability between people and their natural worlds. Of equal importance is that the basis for knowledge creation lies in the dynamic relationships arising from the interaction of people with their environments, as well as with one another over generations through social and physical relationships. Relationships form the core underlying foundation for IK (Tau 1999) with its most distinguishing features including: 1) a knowledge that is said to be a

product of a dynamic system, 2) it is an integral part of the physical and social environment of communities, and 3) it is a collective good (Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Viergever 1999). Consequently, Indigenous people, particularly in rural areas, find themselves in a contentious relationship with their environments where humans are not seeing themselves as part of nature or creation. It further serves to erase Indigenous peoples' custodial relationship with the land while capitalism introduces it as alienable, exclusive and as property to be owned and sold.

### *2.3 Socio-economic indicators*

Other determinants including socio-economic indicators like employment, education, social support, living conditions and access to health services also form part of the root causes of poor health and health disparities. As Reading & Wien (2012) write, the experience of inequalities in social determinants of health not only exposes the additional burden of carrying health problems; it also restricts individuals, communities and nations from accessing resources that may ameliorate problems. In the case of Indigenous people, we see how social determinants influence diverse dimensions of health on one side while also creating circumstances and environments that in turn reproduce negative subsequent determinants of health. That is why, when social determinants are not addressed, sickness becomes cyclical. Additionally, the link between poverty and disability emanates from such a relationship. Living in poor conditions has been linked to increased illness and disability which in turn creates diminished opportunities to engage in meaningful employment thus further aggravating poverty (Duncan & Watson 2009; Health Canada 2005; Marmot 2007; Raphael 2004; Syme 2007).

However, health indicators for Indigenous people are not often articulated by researchers and those responsible for health policies and training of health practitioners. Data recognising Indigenous peoples' health is scarce in Africa and particularly in Southern Africa, thus posing problems for recognition of Indigenous people and their knowledges (Ohenjo et al. 2006). Such scarcity of data hinders opportunities for Indigenous health to be positively affected at the levels of disease prevention and health promotion. Similarly, the lack of recognition of Indigenous peoples' health also robs practitioners of the necessary and critical understanding of Indigenous peoples' lives, their being, and how what they do or not do relates to their health and well-being. For this current study, it becomes crucial to question the relevance of the formal education system in enabling Indigenous people to reclaim, connect and revitalise their knowledges which are at the core of their health and well-being.

It is particularly important to understand the formal schooling relevance when assertions such as, education system has brought ill health are made (Mji 2012). This is further unpacked in Chapters 3 and 4 in terms of how the education system has thus far responded particularly to IKs.

#### *2.4 Urban-rural mobility and upsurge of lifestyle diseases*

Indigenous people face various push factors which may lead children to leave their traditional communities for a better life, and better employment and education. However, the failure to experience the desired life or employment and the absence of acceptable housing are major factors that later pull people back to their traditional communities (King et al. 2009). The rural-urban migration has come with rapidly changing lifestyles including “modern high-calorie, high-fat, high-salt, and low-fibre diets, changing infant feeding practices, decreased physical activity, overcrowding, and environmental contamination” (Gracey & King 2009; King et al. 2009). The rising commercialism, acculturation, and rapidly changing lifestyles often influence these changes, as Gracey & King (2009) argue. Gracey and King (2009) write that the effects of these on health of Indigenous people has intensified over the years in industrialized countries and are a major public health problem for example in America and Australia. As in South Africa (Scott et al. 2017), the worsening lifestyle-related diseases are obesity, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases which have become part of an international public health crisis (Gracey 2002; Gracey & King 2009). It may be that these lifestyles are often imposed by the experience of coloniality which drives the rural-urban mobility. The question that needs to be asked is to what extent have these influences defined the lifestyle of Indigenous people. Additionally, what would be a meaningful role of an interface of knowledges in the formal education system in facilitating self-determination?

### **3. An occupation-centred understanding of human behaviour**

While looking at health and well-being, it is important to have an ‘occupation-centred’<sup>3</sup> understanding of human behaviour as this understanding moves towards a broader appreciation of humans as occupational beings<sup>4</sup> (Duncan & Watson, 2009). Breaking down

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis an occupation-centred understanding means looking at and thinking about people as actors in their lived environments (Duncan & Watson, 2009). This links to IKS because it views humanity as coherently embedded in the environment with a better understanding of ourselves when we relate to the environment.

<sup>4</sup> Doing refers to the actual engagement experienced as embodied action unfolding over time. Being denotes experiencing our existence, nature and constitution through the things we do and thereby becoming renewed or diminished (Hocking, 2000).



this relationship of ‘doing beings’ would be to disintegrate people from their nature. Mji’s study (2012) demonstrates how this relationship has been broken down among Indigenous people with different systems such as the education system alienating people from their daily activities and from the knowledges embedded in these key activities of the village to maintain their health and well-being. This is to say, separating people from their IK means separating people from that which shapes their identity in a social context. In the modern world, factors such as globalisation, urban/rural divide and many other factors discussed above increasingly reshape how Indigenous people see themselves in relation to the dominating counterparts. These often bring convergence and clashes between individuality and social embeddedness.

Occupational science is described by Iwama (2003) as the study of humans as occupational beings, particularly how beings achieve personal meaning through everyday doing. This definition positions all humans as occupational beings (Gray 1998; Yerxa et al. 1989). In this current study, the term occupations encompass all that people need, want, or are expected to do as well as what it means to them (Asaba et al. 2007; Wilcock 2006). Occupation also refers to the various day-to-day activities done by individuals, within families and communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. These ‘culturally sanctioned occupations’, as Wilcock (1993) argues, enable the organisation of time and resources and assists economic self-sufficiency, social relationships and personal growth. However, Iwama (2003:584) notes the significance of avoiding definitions of occupation which are within “culturally narrow lanes” influenced by contextual meanings derived from Western ideologies. The activities that Indigenous people participate in contribute to their health and well-being and demonstrate the key values embedded in their culture. When these activities are neglected, ill health sets in resulting in delayed progress of the villages with regard to their key indicators of health. It is very important that these occupations are not side-lined but recognised as key activities for facilitating health and well-being in such villages.

This occupational perspective is a perfect fit to understanding Indigenous health because firstly it brought out a teleological stance towards human development that is based on the links between doing, being and becoming.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, it underscored the normative interpretations about the links between what people do, their health and well-being and their development (Duncan & Watson 2009). Indigenously, one must understand the values and

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<sup>5</sup> Becoming refers to an ever-incomplete process of something (maybe perceived as a negative or positive difference or change) within a person coming into manifestation or realisation (adapted from Wilcock, 2006)

traditions of their environment and participate in occupations that mirror these values and traditions. These occupations define and claim one's identity (Mji 2012). Christiansen (1999: 549) stated that our "identities are closely tied to what we do and our interpretations of those actions in the context of our relationships with others". This statement signifies the close relationship between people, environment, identity, context and the activities done within the environment. It is thus essential that education systems do not break these relationships as they contribute to the identity of children which is grounding. Any breakdown is likely to contribute to the disconnect experienced by many Indigenous children.

Over and above, the occupation construct fits into the constructs of this study (knowledge production, health and well-being) as a cut-across construct that is used to create and practice both the knowledge system and the health and well-being practices of Indigenous people. Therefore, the meaning and purpose of engagement in occupations in these villages is two-pronged. Occupations are key in developing, validating and practising IK. The purpose of this is that this contextual knowledge prepares the young one to function fully in his or her villages fulfilling the roles according to age and stage with the hope that later, they will also turn around and transfer this knowledge to the next generation and contribute to the validation and adjustment in a world that is rapidly changing. Additionally, the same occupations are used as yardsticks for measuring and creating health and a way of living in these villages. The key questions of interest emerging are: How is the formal education system speaking to these contextually relevant ways of doing, living and becoming? Secondly, how much of these contextual activities are used as learning activities to situate learning that is relevant and appropriate? How is it to preparing and/or enabling learners to live and sustain themselves in their villages or elsewhere? With rural areas that are constantly vulnerable to sickness and disease, what is the contribution of formal education in ensuring that people are liberated to exercise choice and control over their ways of being (which is about one's identity and culture) and living well?

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed in detail health and well-being of Indigenous people as well as causes for the negative health status. The chapter further questions the role of formal education in changing what seems to be a negative status of Indigenous health. In the next chapter, I discuss the struggle to reclaim African knowledges.

## **Chapter 3: The struggle to reclaim African Indigenous knowledges**

“Does the white man understand our custom...? How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad... The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” (Achebe 1957: 155-156).

## Introduction

This chapter traces the origins of subjugation of IKs within the colonial-apartheid era and the role of education systems in embedding and reproducing this subjugation and marginalisation. In doing this, I follow the decolonial scholar, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) views on the importance of revisiting the ugly past and reflecting on the undesirable present in order to re-imagine ourselves for a desirable future. This exercise is important because, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) writes, Africa continues to be the victim of hegemonic Eurocentric and Western generated knowledge which are not informed by the geo-and-biographical contextual understanding of Africa's societies and their knowledges. I was further guided by another decolonial scholar, Grosfoguel (2005; 2001) who provides a useful lens for understanding how the racial colonial imperial power relations, in which our epistemic struggles are founded, were created and produced epistemic racism and sexism. This epistemic racism and sexism served, among other things, to inferiorise knowledges produced by other beings while privileging white males of the five countries (namely: Britain, Spain, France, Portugal and Belgium) considered as superior. Lastly, I further use the IK system and decoloniality thought to challenge the deficit thinking of Western thought. I note that the purpose of this chapter is not to examine Western knowledge as totally useless nor is it to advocate for Indigenous knowledges in an essentialist or fundamentalist manner. I am also not suggesting that Western knowledge should not be taught, rather I seek to underline the need to critically examine assumptions and implications inherent in the dominant Western knowledge in African education systems as the only privileged way of knowing and thinking.

### 1. What is the historic process that led to the subjugation of Indigenous knowledges?

Grosfoguel (2005, 2011) aptly locates his arguments of the creation of a racist and sexist epistemic order in what he calls epistemicides<sup>6</sup> and/or genocides<sup>7</sup>. He describes this order as a 'modern/colonial/ capitalist/ christiancentric / patriarchal world-system' which assumed a universalistic, neutral, objective point of view (Grosfoguel 2005, 2011). Its birth is traceable to 1492 when Christopher Columbus claimed to have "discovered" the "New World" in his encounters with Indigenous people. Encounters which represent a huge legacy of suffering and destruction among Indigenous people (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Smith 2012). At this same

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<sup>6</sup> Epistemicide is the destruction of knowledge structures

<sup>7</sup> Genocide is the killing of populations of people

time, Vasco da Gama circled the southern tip of the African continent (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). The unfolding of European expansion in Africa was marked by these events. This expansion birthed the modern world state system and its international order of empires driven by different logics such as racial discrimination (Grosfoguel 2005; 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Rene Descartes, the founder of modern Western Cartesian philosophy “I think therefore I am” (Smith 2012; Grosfoguel 2011; Semali & Kincheloe 1999) was one logic which perpetuated this racial discrimination. Readings of this Cartesian by various decolonial scholars (Grosfoguel 2011; Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Smith 2012;) reveal three critiques, namely;

- It does not recognise the dialogical process of knowledge production,
- It creates a modernist dualism which separates the body and the mind, mind and nature in order to claim a “non-situated, universal, God-eyed view of knowledge” (Grosfoguel 2011), and
- It positions a Western man at the centre of knowledge production.

Such an epistemic strategy facilitated colonial expansion and domination. Consequently, knowledges were hierarchised as superior and inferior following a series of characterisations. Grosfoguel captures well this Western articulation in saying:

We went from the sixteenth century characterisation of “people without writing” to the eighteenth and nineteenth-century characterisation of “people without history,” to the twentieth-century characterisation of “people without development” and more recently, to the early twenty-first-century of “people without democracy” (Grosfoguel 2007:214).

Africans were associated with the primitive, uncivilised, non-Western, as colonising characteristics thus occupying an inferior ‘othered’ positionality (Grosfoguel 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

This was preceded by ‘I conquer therefore I am’ (Grosfoguel 2011). It was a conquering case of ‘develop or I kill you, be civilised or I kill you, democratise or I kill you’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Grosfoguel 2011). As a result, Indigenous Africans were re-articulated by Westerners as disabled beings who lack souls, history, civilization, development, democracy, human rights and knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Those who did not want to convert to

the Christian monarchy were killed. This Western logic devalued non-European subjects and their knowledge systems. This logic also meant that these devalued subjects could be enslaved because they were not seen as humans but animals (Kanu 2006; Mignolo & Escobar 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). A logic which lead to what Santos termed ‘abyssal thinking’ which separates “humanity into a zone of being” for white people and “a zone of non-being for Black people” (Santos 2007:45 cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

These dividing colonial encounters left Africans and other non-Western people struggling to gain their own ontological and epistemological density. The first negative consequence was that of slave trading with African people written out of humanity (zone of being) completely to zones of non-being where they were available not only for enslavement but for colonisation too (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Santos 2007). Africa specifically, according to Mbembe’s (2000, 2007) categorisation, went through three forms of violence, namely; i) foundational violence which authorized conquering rights; ii) legitimization violence which authorized this foundational violence; and iii) maintenance violence which ensured permanence of colonial control (Mbembe 2007).

Decolonial scholars thus argue that modernity crippled innovation and invention in Africa through slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid in Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Shizha 2006). Both imperialism and coloniality as products of the modernity project, are responsible for the reproduction of an African subjectivity that is lacking (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). A similar modernist articulation of Indigenous beings is explained by an Indigenous scholar, Smith (2012) in New Zealand where the Maoris were referred to as primitive peoples “who could not use their minds or intellects, could not invent things nor create institutions or history, could not imagine nor produce anything of value, and lastly did not practice the arts of civilization”. Some decolonial scholars thus believe that these characterisations lead to an imposed idea that Indigenous people disqualified themselves, not from civilization but from humanity itself (Grosfoguel 2011; Mignolo 2007; Smith 2012). Further subjugation is also evident when the British transported Black men from rural areas to work as migrant labourers in mines, enabling the racist capitalist system to maximise profits. As Biko (2014) reveals, Africans woke up overnight to find themselves dispossessed of their land and turned into cheap labourers who dig gold for the white colonialists. He further states that, in this process of dispossession, displacement, and enslavement, African Indigenous homes, families and societies were torn apart in the interest of chasing profits by the British colonial capitalists. Verwoerd also believed that the only place for African natives

in society was physical labour and service. This racist logic informed the development of Bantu education which was meant to deny Blacks intellectual growth so as to sustain the inequality required for capitalism to thrive (Soudien & Baxen, 1997).

## **2. Implications of this racist world order on Africans**

The advent of colonialism and apartheid meant that Indigenous epistemologies started disappearing due to devaluation and misrepresentation hence the need to reclaim Indigenous African voices. In his analysis of what he termed ‘education of the colonial bondsman’, Ngugi wa Thiongo (2012) says African minds were dislocated from a place they already know to another starting point even when the body was still located in the homeland. The education system imposed on Africans has been one institution where this dislocation thrived. In this case, Ngugi argues that formal education continues with the functions of colonialism beyond formal ending of colonialism with the aim to prepare another victory in the post-dependence era. As a result, a new phase of colonialism which is no longer managed by settlers but managed by the ‘native elite’ in a Black skin with a white soul began (Fanon 2008). The consequence is white supremacy that remains entrenched and obscured by African elites as well as curriculum that is largely colonial. As a result, colonial education continues to be hegemonic and disruptive to Indigenous epistemologies while also negating the voices of Indigenous people (Higgs 2008,2016; Ramose 2003).

Fanon (2008) and other writers such as Smith (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argue that imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonised peoples, disconnecting people from their landscapes, histories and languages, their social relations and ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world. This systematic fragmentation process has consequences which can still be seen in many African countries. For instance, Ngugi wa Thiongo (2012) elaborated about a continuous process of alienating Indigenous people from their base within the context of Kenya. This process imposes an attitude, to Indigenous people, of judging themselves through the lens of the coloniser. This attitude has led Africans to hate themselves while wishing to be white (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Ngugi wa Thiongo 2012; Shizha 2006). In this process, a manifestation of an identity crisis with restricted and programmed thinking informed by textbook knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) thus results. Additionally, and similarly to what Wilson (2004) argued, the result is a devastating status of Indigenous communities that endure a plethora of social and economic ills and/or injustices (poverty, dependency, family violence, disease and broken families) which influence agency,



in accessing health and well-being as discussed in chapter 2. These continued struggles faced by Indigenous people reveal that IK and practices are still not valued enough for consideration as alternative ways of engaging with modern practices (McGovern 2000). I will now discuss Indigenous education and how spaces for IK can be reclaimed as a strategy.

### **3. Indigenous education**

As is well known, forms of Indigenous education existed and worked in Africa for years as systems now commonly known as the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), prior to the arrival of the European missionaries (Diop 1974, 1981 cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018; Mudimbe 1988). As such, Mudimbe (1988) accounted that all human beings were born into a valid knowledge system implying that education has always been Indigenous to every society (as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). However, as Bray et al. (1986) and Kelly (1999) posit, their content and form differed from society to society though goals were strikingly similar. This system of education encompassed the everyday realities and occupational skills of a given people in relation to their lives (Odora 1994; Shizha 2006; Smith 1934). This is part of what Jansen (2009) refers to as the social curriculum. The centre of the learning process was the home where everybody learnt the basic requirements of life. The home provided the setting for a holistic approach to an education which contributes to the health and well-being of the community. The mother in particular was the primary teacher (Ajayi 1985) and grandmothers participating as active teachers in primary education using folktales in the evenings to children (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, 2018).

Indigenous ways of knowing undoubtedly continue to be transformed by diverse colonial experiences including the globalisation efforts. While colonial and postcolonial education prepares young people for modernity and capitalism (Odora-Hoppers 1993), Indigenous education prepares people for their adult responsibilities at home (Scanlon 1964). The latter is a holistic education preparing learners for life in the community as opposed to life outside the community. Since it is not education about facts only but also about how to be part of society, it considers every aspect of community life (Baguma & Aheisibwe 2009). The Western view of knowledge has always lacked this holistic nature and approach of Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge production because of wanting universality and superiority. Western knowledge also has a tendency of self-correcting including not taking criticism from outside the Western paradigm. This is because it believes that other knowledges have no science and have not achieved the modernity project of overcoming

barbarianship and primitivism (Alonso 2007). As a result, it further blocks dialoguing with other knowledges. On the other hand, IKs are said to have a problem of conformism (Smith 2012).

Advocating for ecologies of knowledges<sup>8</sup> that reclaim Indigenous voices is not only an urgent imperative, but requires what Lebakeng calls the need to “cut the intellectual umbilical cord from the Western epistemological paradigm” (Lebakeng 2014:5). Wilson (2004) argues that reclaiming and reaffirming IKs offers a central form of resistance to colonial forces not only because of its potential to restore quality of life and dignity to Indigenous people but in assisting with advancing ongoing resistance against oppressive factors that have been defining Indigenous peoples’ existence as incapable of self-determination. This is the gap within our current formal education system (the next chapter will elaborate on this aspect within the context of South Africa).

The African saying ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ best captures Indigenous education and emphasises the embedded collective responsibility of the community in ensuring socialisation and education (Scanlon, 1964; Semali 1999). Its assumption is that, matching learning with local needs would make education have a positive effect on the lives of learners. The saying also positions the community as the principal educator (Semali 1999). This means all members of society especially elders have knowledge that contributes to the collective actions of providing skills to young ones. In this context, all people fulfil expectations of being both a teacher and a lifelong learner. As White (1996) observed, the presence of many teachers is the most common trait of Indigenous education. What is demonstrated here is that a child can have many teachers at any given development stage because learning occurs in a community setting. This is to say, teachings from a mother differ from those of a grandmother which is in turn different from the reinforcement that siblings and extended family members provide (Ngulube 1989; Abdullah & Stringer 1994; Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Makori 2001; Omolewa 2007; Banda et al. 2008; Shava 2016).

In such education systems, first and foremost children learn that nature is alive and possesses different kinds of spirits. They learn that land is not just for habiting, but to be nurtured and used to produce and practice this knowledge (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). In this land, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and grandparents are the first educators with women teaching

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<sup>8</sup>Ecologies of knowledge embraces the thought that there is more than one way to conceptualise

women's activities and men teaching men's activities. Later on, the community also steps in to assist educating children on how to live and work as women and men in that society (Bray, Clarke & Stephens, 1986; Ajayi 1985; Oyewumi 2016).

The home, rivers, gardens and forests are the sites of Indigenous education by which IK is learnt thus highlighting the ecological basis to Indigenous education (Omolewa 2007).

Through a dialogical relationship with nature, this education takes the form of daily experiences in addition to a variety of observations. Integral to Indigenous education, as suggested by Omolewa (2007), is the informal and vocational training where each person is practically trained to develop a set of skills in preparation for his or her role in society. This speaks to the holistic and dynamic characteristics of IK. Acquiring knowledge about different aspects of life and living (such as planting seasons, good soil, harvest methods among other things) is the most important aspect of Indigenous education. This is because, essentially, this education is firstly a way of life (Semali & Kincheloe 1999).

Various African scholars also assert that in an African society the child learnt from the mother and other adults within the household to talk, to count and appreciate the subtleties of the language (Semali & Kincheloe 1994; Makori 2001; Oyewumi 2016). Abdullah & Stringer (1994), Makori (2001), Ngulube (1989), and Semali & Kincheloe (1999) acknowledge that this important level was largely individualised between mother and child but also communal for children of the same age within the household facilitated by grandmothers. It worked well as they discussed through riddles and conundrums, games, fables and storytelling. The second level, in their understanding, occurred when the child was educated partly through an informal system of apprenticeship to one or more adults to acquire skills in an occupation and the knowledge relevant for the pursuit of that occupation (Banda et al. 2008). Jansen (2004) affirms that this learning from observation and doing is often much more enduring and formative than fractions in school or metaphors in the language class. The erasure of IK by Western knowledges and its school systems serves to deny the fact that learning starts from home with the mother being a primary teacher. The erasure also denies access to knowledge in its various forms.

Real life examples are used for children to imitate and learn (Maurial 1999) because education is considered as not separate from but linked to everyday life of Indigenous people (Shava 2016). This means that apart from oral tradition for learning (Diop 1974), life activities are also used as learning opportunities. This way of learning in Indigenous

education places emphasis on participant observation, imitation, story telling, community forums, participation in initiation ceremonies and cultural activities, collective ploughing or weeding as ways of facilitating learning (Omolewa 2007; Semali & Kincheloe 1999; Shava 2016). Shava further states that the diversity shown in these educational approaches resonates with what formal education advocates. This means that Indigenous education can augment learning processes in formal education and contribute to transforming the education system to be relevant (Shava 2016).

In Indigenous education, there is a strong emphasis on the community as an educative agent alongside parents who are the first line of educators (Semali 1999). Lifelong learning is the major goal of Indigenous education. The output of Indigenous education lies in producing a complete lifelong learner who is cultured, respectful, integrated, sensitive and responsive to the needs of self, family and community at large (Nikiema 2009; Omolewa 2007). In contrast to Western forms of education, Indigenous forms of education tend to reflect the community and wider society's values, wisdom and expectations because of the above-mentioned different levels and spaces of learning. Western forms tend to put emphasis on the individual's intellectual development with less attention to the needs, goals and expectations of the wider society (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). It is here that the centring of Indigenous perspectives becomes significant to better shape and mould formal schooling for the colonised.

In the Indigenous context, education can be regarded in terms of the impact it brings to society hence the emphasis placed on educating individuals on how to live. Western education, on the other hand, tends to be bookish and somewhat divorced from the life and culture of the wider society. Western education is also limited in terms of preparing individuals for life in the community (Bray, Clarke & Stephens 1986; Semali & Kincheloe 1999). This could explain the disjuncture noted by both Serpell (2011) in his work with Indigenous communities in Zambia and Breidlid (2009) in a critical review of education in African contexts. Both Serpell and Breidlid conclude that formal education is continuously alienating children from their communities as they are socialised and forced to appropriate different realities within the formal education system, realities that are not their realities, but are derived from Western logic. What is clear in these distinctions is a conflict in values between the formal and Indigenous education.

This first conflict is influenced by the superior position formal education has taken in knowledge production in the name of nurturing civilization, literacy, progress and development (Shizha 2006). This follows the erasure of African civilizations prior to colonial rule. In doing so, Africa is denied the high level of educational development it had already reached Indigenously, contrary to the widespread belief that Africa was a dark place prior to the arrival of foreigners (Omolewa 2007). This colonial narrative, as Omolewa further argues, demonstrates how Indigenous education was disrupted by the arrival of European (Western) education in the fifteenth century. The arrival which brought what is termed formal school system followed by Christian missionaries who later used the new educational system to cultivate the minds of Africans to accept European values and practices as was supported by the colonial administration (Ngugi wa Thiongo 2005; Omolewa 2007; Shizha 2006). Ngugi's writings about Kenya reflect this similar experience.

Another conflict can be attributed to the Western practice of indoor education which broke the locality aspect of IK practices. The learning was separated from the local, from the land (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). In addition to spatial breakdown, Western practice also started fragmenting knowledges into different disciplines and courses (the result of specialisation) which are further fragmented into designated time periods through the adherence to the school schedule (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). These designations contributed to the fragmentation of the holistic nature of Indigenous education.

The concept of time further became fragmented with clear cuts between school time and family time (Ansion 1988 cited in Semali & Kincheloe 1999). Participation in daily tasks for survival and learning was reduced and became burdensome as schooling took over, yet these tasks are learning opportunities in Indigenous education. This is to say, school time broke all these long-developed linkages (Maurial 1999). However, some Indigenous people have attempted to resist these fragmentations by continuing to appreciate their education values, such as the pursuit of excellence and inclusion of all (Omolewa 2007). These efforts of resistance however never yielded lasting benefits as seen in the case studies of Education for self-reliance in Tanzania, African renaissance in South Africa, Authenticity in Zaire and movements of Africanising the curriculum in various countries such as Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Guinea (Omolewa 2007). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) also reports that Ethiopia failed in defending its IK and related education system in the twentieth century, though it had survived colonial conquest and direct colonialism but it further discarded its Indigenous language as its medium and adopted European imitation like other

African countries that were conquered. These incidences showcase the long-term consequences of the imposition of modern institutions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

However, as the struggle to decolonise continues, some scholars strongly assert that it is possible for knowledge systems to work together and complement one another. For example, Onwu and Mosimege's (2004) work on Indigenous ways of knowing and Le Grange's (2004, 2007) work both conclude that Western and IKs can work together. Le Grange sees IKs and Western science as complementary and not in conflict, when they nurture each other. He further argues that IKs have a role to play in the transformation, deconstruction and reconstruction of the post-apartheid South African education system. The question remains what and how this would be implemented. Also, what are the specific IKs and how would they play a role, thus providing the rationale for this study.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter traced the historic process in which the subjugation of IKs and Indigenous peoples' voices occurred. I argued that the struggle to reclaim African Indigenous epistemologies, is both an urgent and necessary task that seeks to reverse the epistemicide which was central to the conquest and dominance by Western knowledges. I also argued that it is key for Indigenous people to define their own education needs to resist the domination of modern structures. It is important that IKs be recognised as legitimate ways of knowing and producing knowledge. However, it should not be subjected to the same processes of validation as Western knowledge since it is based on a different evolutionary process in its entirety.

The following chapter will reflect on the picture of the South African formal education and how it has failed or succeeded to reclaim IKs and voices. This provides motivation for continued exploratory work of a transformative education system.

## **Chapter 4: The South African Education System**



## Introduction

The previous chapter traced the historic process which informed the development of the dominant colonial education currently existing in knowledge institutions. The chapter also argued for more than one way of conceptualising this, calling for ecologies of knowledge. This chapter traces the multiple education policy shifts as witnessed by the South African context since 1994 – the dawn of its democratic era. I focus on three different curriculum moments to demonstrate some of the transitions and the continued marginal role placed on IKs. A reflection on the current status of education is provided, and lastly some examples of practice from various contexts reflecting the creative integration of Indigenous and Western knowledges within formal schooling contexts are outlined.

### 1. The policy journey of Indigenous knowledge in South Africa's education

We come from a history where the Bantu Education Act of 1953 set out to ensure that whites received better education than Blacks. Blacks, said Hendrik Verwoerd (Prime Minister from 1958 to 1966), were to be educated only enough to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Black education was given less funding than white schools and Black students were taught almost no maths and science. Whites received a high quality and comprehensive education (Masemula 2013). The church-run schools were subsequently shut and there was a need to formulate a new philosophical discourse in education. Apartheid education in the form of Christian National Education promoted values and knowledge of only the dominant racial group (Higgs 2003; Kanu 2006;). This was conceptualised as the official pedagogy which was crucial to further the hegemonic element of apartheid education (Higgs 1994, 1995, 2003; Kanu 2006).

Around the time of the transition to democracy in 1994, access to education was expanded, replacing a school system segregated by race with one that was divided by wealth. This meant more funding for schools in poor areas but schools in richer areas could charge fees. Theoretically, these funded schools could admit pupils even if parents could not afford the fees; however, in practice it meant establishing fortresses of privilege.

Curriculum transformation in South Africa was prompted by the political change which led to the South African democratic constitution of 1996. The Department of Education adopted

the aims of the constitution as a basis for education in the country. The White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education (DoE) 1995) captured the aims of the constitution thus providing a foundation for policy development of various sections of the education department. In the following paragraphs, I revisit this policy journey taken to integrate IKS and modern knowledges.

Embracing both training and education within the national reconstruction and development programme, the White paper on Education and Training (DoE 1995) emphasised the need for an integrated approach to learning. This approach adopted a view of learning which rejected the rigid separation of ‘academic and applied’, ‘theory and practice’, ‘knowledge and skills’, ‘head and hand’ (DoE 1995). This document also aimed for civic responsibility in education by pushing for an education which would enable people to effectively participate in all processes of society including cultural and community life. Among other things, community involvement in education, the need for preservation of the environment, and teaching methodologies as well as curricula that are responsive to communities’ needs were focused on (DoE 1995 cited in Masemula 2013). This White Paper promoted an educational vision that went beyond content but allowed the learner to be prepared for both life in the community and in the world.

Following the white paper, the National Curriculum Statements, otherwise referred to as the NCS (DoE 2003) came into effect with the aims of healing past divisions in education, improving all citizens’ quality of life and encouraging the full potential of each person. The NCS document had principles which were expected to reflect in all subjects in schools. These principles included valuing IKS, social justice and inclusivity, outcomes-based education, integration and social transformation, to name a few (DoE 2003).

While these policy frameworks expressed resolutions to transform from the education system South Africa was exposed to prior to 1994, as Masemula (2013) notes various IKS scholars highlight divergent views. On one hand, Msila (2007) argued that the NCS was not a purely Africanised version of education though it constantly mentioned the inclusion of IKS, while Botha (2010) dismissed it as based on a Western ideology and culture and thus could not accommodate IKS. Botha was advocating a centring approach to IKS here as part of South Africa’s educational transformational efforts. On the other hand, Gumbo (2016) criticises Botha for not recognising the transformation principles encapsulated in the NCS through Outcomes Based Education (OBE). As a result, Gumbo attributes the failure of the NCS to

the lack of commitment to embed IKS at implementation level. Also focusing at implementation levels, Msila (2007) pointed out that the NCS's learner activeness principle was an opportunity to promote IKS at implementation level, yet it failed.

The South African IKS policy of 2004 was thus developed by the Department of Science and Technology to provide a framework which could be used to make appropriate interventions. Departments such as Science and Technology, the Environment and Tourism, Agriculture, Education, Health, Land Affairs, Arts and Culture, Provincial and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Water Affairs, and Sport and Recreation formed part of the committee which participated in the formulation of this policy. This was a policy that drove the integration of African perspectives into South Africa's knowledge systems as part of the redress and was expected to contribute to the development of new research paradigms (DST 2004 cited in Masemula 2013). The policy was adopted by cabinet in 2004 (DST 2004:30). In its conception, the policy noted the biases of globalisation in its endeavour to impose a homogenous worldwide culture. The intention was to integrate the policy into the education and qualifications framework as well as integrate it with other policies. The National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office was therefore established to pioneer the national IKS priorities through proactive engagement. The policy had five key focus areas:

- “Affirmation of African cultural values in the face of globalisation.
- Development of services provided by IK holders and practitioners, traditional medicine and Indigenous language developers, folklore and agriculture.
- Contribution of IK to the economy, employment and wealth creation.
- Interfacing IKS with other knowledge systems, in order to increase the rate of innovation.
- Developing a coherent and consistent government approach in aligning the IKS policy with other regulatory frameworks” (DST 2004: 12–16 cited in Masemula 2013).

Some of the expectations which were meant to be targeted by the integration of the IKS into education and the National Qualifications Framework included to:

- “infuse the values and principles of IK into the national curriculum;
- transform the curriculum from a primarily content-driven approach to one of problem solving;
- promote agricultural and industrial enterprises, particularly in rural areas; and

- augment grassroots innovations by promoting cooperative ventures between Indigenous and local communities” (DST 2004 cited in Masemula 2013:106).

The idea was to make it mandatory for all subjects from Grade R to twelve to ‘Value IKS’ (Masemula 2013). Since then, multiple shifts in curriculum policy have been witnessed in the South African education system during the past two decades. As a result, teachers, parents and learners were expected to adapt to these curriculum policy changes (Kanu 2006). However, it is worth noting that the ANC post 1994, in accordance with its policies, focused mainly on being included by the dominant group while it continued to push the neoliberal agenda. The ANC merely highlighted what it did not want in the new dawn (post-apartheid) and neglected paying attention to what it wanted. For example, centring IKS remained neglected in implementation. I show this in the following different curriculum moments. This lack of intent remains the greatest challenge that continues to perpetuate the marginalisation of IKS in schools and in the broader mainstream. As a result, despite IK’s recognition in various education and related policies, Indigenous people’s sense of the world in South Africa endures a marginal role in the country’s education (Botha 2010; Breidlid 2003, 2004). It may be the case that, despite the IKS policy having indicated an extensive commitment to IKS from government in relation to restoring the African knowledge dignity, this commitment remained a symbolic one for two decades. The presence of such a progressive policy in an environment where the hierarchy of knowledge and power still exists is of concern. Additionally, the dualism between IK as the primitive and Western knowledge as having overcome primitivism remains a powerful hegemony which proves to be challenging (Green 2007). This hegemony plays out in the different South African curriculum moments which I now discuss.

## **2. The democratic South Africa’s critical curriculum moments**

The term ‘curriculum’ has been defined in a number of ways as different meanings have been attached to it. Some scholars define curriculum as planned learning experiences and structured documents bringing about the goals and objectives of education (Marsh 2009; Danmole 2011). This definition is limiting as it does not express the reciprocity of teaching and learning. It seems to focus primarily on what is taught to the students and not what is learnt, therefore compromising the connection with the society. The social constructivist perspective on ‘curriculum’ understands this concept as an agency of social and political

reproduction. The curriculum emerges directly from society and is an ideological tool as well as a vehicle of social change driven by the dominant social group (Jackson 1992; Morgan 2009). As such, it plays a central role in the development and reproduction of society over time and geographical area (Jackson 1992; Morgan 2009). The philosophy of constructionism places emphasis on learners' conceptions and active participation in the learning process recognising that cultural and contextual prior experience from social interactions have an influence on perception and interpretation (Quiroz 1999). However, constructivism is limited in attending to hegemony issues, the teacher-student relationship and the power assumptions which undergirds curriculum.

In search for a working definition of curriculum for this chapter, critical pedagogy best aligns the understanding of curriculum from a relational IKS and decolonial theoretical standpoint. In this critical pedagogy, as Kincheloe (1993) argues, when learners and educators interact, confront contradictions, and when the information presented by the educator collides with the experience of the learner, knowledge is created. Equally important is that African experience in its totality ought to be the foundation and source of construction (Potokri 2016). According to Lunenberg (2011) and Potokri (2016), curriculum fits more as a non-technical approach. This approach represents a rethinking of curriculum while also rejecting the traditional curriculum planning methods (Potokri 2016). This stance not only questions the restricting narrow confinements of content but equally challenges the intent of curriculum practice and its assumptions which undergird the production and reproduction of knowledge (Semali & Stambach 1997 cited in Mule 1999). Such an enquiry on curriculum further questions the very notion of not regarding learners as knowledge producers, whose language and knowledge is privileged in curriculum and if it is left out this has implications for the educational process (Mule 1999).

Taking the South African case to speak to education within a historic process, I draw from various studies. I have already cited Kanu (2006) above who speaks about the transition from a Christian National Education form which promoted the values of a dominant group (mainly white) to a National Curriculum Statement which conferred legitimacy of knowledges and values of all South Africans. In the following section I refer to Jansen (2004) who analysed two curriculum moments of post-apartheid South Africa (the introduction of Curriculum 2005 and the platform on values in education). He demonstrates the power dynamics and a

disregard for IKs in these two moments of curricula. I also refer to Breidlid (2009) who reviewed the implementation of curriculum 2005 when the ANC led government was reelected. Lastly, I refer to Hewson, Javu and Holtman (2009) and Kanu (2006) who reflect on CAPS curriculum. All these curriculum moments and changes demonstrate a narrative that post-apartheid ANC-led South Africa never intended to draw in and centre IKs with its educational values and concepts. What is further shown is its lack of intent to facilitate an education that liberates South Africans to take back the freedom and power that was taken by the colonial and apartheid government who only saw Africans as cheap labourers. The review of the different curriculum moments suggests that the education system has remained imperialistic and colonising in its nature thus leaving Indigenous Africans mostly in rural South Africa. The struggle may not only be limited to bread and butter issues but also epistemic freedom. It may be the case that ignoring IKS is a form of organised subjugation of ways of life of those othered by colonial domination (Ramose 2002; Higgs 2003). This may, for years, influence people's ways of seeing, thinking and being (identity) in a post-apartheid South Africa.

While acknowledging the importance of formal Western education, the following section looks at the different SA curriculum moments raising questions relating to education's subjugation of Indigenous people and their knowledges.

### *2.1 The first curriculum moment: Curriculum 2005 and OBE*

The first curriculum moment was the introduction of curriculum 2005. Curriculum 2005 (hence referred to as C 2005) with its underlying methodology called Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was implemented by the ANC-led government. This curriculum came with various reviews. Jansen (2009) suggested it was a neutral curriculum as far as values were concerned. It had broad outcomes that were not crystallised within learning areas thus remaining distant around matters of content. Jansen states that this made the curriculum open to a whole range of interpretations due to its broadness. Its broadness was related to its borrowed liberal frameworks which are inadequate in balancing national and ethno-cultural identities (von Lieres 2005).

Breidlid (2009) located it as a modernist curriculum. The positionality by Breidlid argues that the concepts and outcomes of this curriculum are familiar to anyone with some knowledge of curricula from the North. To what extent were IK and cultures recognised and what impact

would this have on pupils learning and power relations? With such dominating North values, it is no doubt that this curriculum contributed to methodically silence IK of the South. Botha (2010) challenged that it ignored and even negated important learning processes which are key aspects of communities. While C2005 was an attempt to address the past education system's engendered social inequality (Botha, 2010), it still could not be said to be what Abdi (2003) called 'an antithesis of colonial and apartheid education'. C2005 still looked to Eurocentric models of outcomes-based education which has a modernity script thus ignoring and contradicting much of what is important in African values and learning of South Africa's majority Black Indigenous people (Botha 2010; Breidlid 2003). Even though IKS are referred to in the revised version (Breidlid 2002), C2005 was still modelling a Western discourse, tracing its origins in New Zealand, Scotland, Canada, United States and Australia (Breidlid 2009; Botha 2010).

This analysis shows that IKS did not feature prominently in this curriculum, as observed earlier by Breidlid (2009) and later Gumbo (2016). I therefore agree with Breidlid's argument that C2005 remained grounded in modern science epistemology which places IKS in the periphery. It is here that such a curriculum creates what the African scholar Chinweizu describes as "Europhiliac Africans" (Chinweizu 1970). This is where most African students, as soon as they enter this education, learn to hate their own knowledges while loving and looking up to European ways that marginalise them as unpacked in the problem statement of this study.

According to C2005, OBE was to "ensure that learners gain the skills, knowledge and values that will allow them to contribute to their own success as well as to the success of their family, community and the nation as a whole" (DoE 1997: 10). Additionally, it states the need "to demonstrate a critical understanding of how South African society has changed and developed" and "to participate actively in promoting a just, democratic and equitable society" (DoE 1997: 56). The question here becomes, how are children going to achieve these outcomes when their own societal realities and ways of being play a marginal role if existing at all in the formal education system? Breidlid reported that 'progress and development' as other concepts of modernity also feature prominently in the policy documents and are to an extent problematised (DoE 1997). However, though the curriculum was attempting to be integrative, the emphasis on universalism, rationality and the compartmentalisation of knowledge still remained problematic and of concern. This is because they challenge African Indigenous values where the focus on the locale, the



pervasiveness of spirituality and the holistic view of life appear to be incompatible with modern values (Breidlid 2002). While I agree with Gumbo (2016) in stating that OBE might not have been the best for South Africa's curriculum problems, it however also had transformational principles which could have been helpful in embedding IKS. This again speaks to a lack of commitment in implementing these principles (Maluleka, Wilkinson & Gumbo 2006). This lack of commitment is evident even in the teacher training and workshops which may imply that the inclusion of IKS in curriculum policy seems to only be a case of beautifying policy and theory with no implementation (Gumbo 2016).

From this type of a curriculum, one can understand why Indigenous people of South Africa and beyond in Africa continue to struggle with reclaiming their own Indigenous values. The incompatibility between Indigenous and formal education results in what Fukudze (2003a, 2003b) calls a daily epistemological movement. As Fakudze argues, African children find themselves having to cross the cultural border between their African sense of the world and that of school as they learn concepts presented in the classroom (Fakudze 2003a, 2003b). It is argued that both the learners and the teachers cross these borders on the same day – Western science at school and practising IK at home. This border crossing is not good when it causes clashes in learning from different spaces. Hence this study investigated how Indigenous people experience this clash with a dominant Western knowledge that is so alien to their home knowledges. Breidlid (2002) found in one study a teacher who said “I am a science teacher at school, and a traditional practitioner at home”. What is also depicted here is how teachers operate between two isolated systems that do not appear to nurture each other. This has often perpetuated the notion that there is only one knowledge/truth (that is the Western scientific knowledge from formal schooling). It has also perpetuated the disjuncture and distance between these two learning spaces (home and school) as well as how these could both work together to contribute to the advancement of communities within which schools are located.

This border crossing was also identified as a big problem among the working class youth in middle class schools in England (Bernstein 1971). What can be observed in South Africa though, as Breidlid (2009) writes, is not only a matter of linguistic code-switching as it may in other contexts, but of a collision of knowledge systems which is a far more serious and substantial character. Its seriousness is not only limited to the actual learning in the classroom, but also in terms of peoples' future contribution to society both locally and globally (Breidlid 2009). Ogunnyi (2003) writes, the crossing of epistemology borders means

that learners and teachers are constantly negotiating and navigating a complex array of mental states requiring them to synergise these conflicts into a worldview that accommodates new experience. Such a complexity should not be overlooked and it is this mixture of worldviews that schools have to take into account (Breidlid 2009) if they are serious about addressing the often experienced disconnect and the resulting health issues.

With its firm grounding in a modern, Western epistemology, the conclusion about C2005 is that it paid lip service to IKS. I therefore agree with Ntuli (2002) who asserts that our education system seems to move further away from IK with no attempt to build on IKS. While noting the changes on the revised version of C2005 as including a discussion of IKS, Ntuli is right in claiming that the influence of IKS in education remained marginal. In schools, Indigenous culture is merely introduced as “a truncated and hence impoverished conception” (Gyekye 1997: 107) such as local cultural expressions like dancing and singing. These events, as important as may be, do not really address the underlying epistemological foundation of the Indigenous culture and its relation to the health and well-being of Indigenous people. Rather, its contributions take a separatist approach remaining isolated from, and treated as an add-on to the general thrust of the curriculum (Breidlid 2009). Such an approach undermines the integration (centring) of IKS across all subjects in schools and continues with the trajectory of constructing IKS ‘ethnic variety’ instead of ‘real knowledge’ (Green 2007). This disregard for IK and the perpetuation of existing power dynamics are further illustrated in the second curriculum moment.

## *2.2 The second curriculum moment: Platform on values*

The second curriculum moment that South Africa went through was the creation of a platform on values in education by the then second Minister of Education since 1994, Naledi Pandor. In this platform, the document on values, democracy and education was developed. This document was viewed as problematic because it pointed to a prescribed morality discourse which was contradicting the notion of democracy (Jansen 2004). Jansen further stated that the document placed the school as the determiner, bearer and articulator of truth – thereby negating that SA has a social curriculum that operates in the everyday lives of people. Such a position contradicts the Indigenous position of the community and the home as the primary educator. Equally so, this position also denies the community its participatory role in education and curriculum development. As Jansen (2004) writes, the indirect meaning

here is that what children learn in their home and community life is often not as important as what they might learn at school. Jansen uses the symbolic meaning of fencing of schools to indicate how this discourse is further enacted. The symbolism is that, what happens inside the school and classrooms must be separated neatly from what happens outside them, thereby creating binary divides between the schools and the communities that children live in. The divisions are a clear result of the Western/European model which was imposed by the imperialists and colonisers as they wanted to civilise Africans. This division separates the learning inside and the learning outside (Jansen 2004). However, as discussed in a previous chapter, it is necessary to understand that children do not only learn from what is taught but also from observations and everyday doing which is often the Indigenous ways of learning at home.

This failure of the education system to incorporate local and contextualised knowledge is problematic because it compromises human advancement particularly in rural areas. Consequently, Ocholla (2007) argues that families are becoming increasingly disintegrated and globalised – a trend that does not create space for IK with other dominating forms of knowledge (scientific, Western or modern). Indigenous people remain stigmatised and seen as inferior. Therefore, in order for Indigenous people to fit into the modern society they are often forced to abandon their Indigenous ways of knowing and living producing generations that do not understand and recognise the value of IK. As Ocholla (2007) puts it, this situation has shaped an intellectually colonised mindset among Indigenous people.

### *2.3 The third curriculum moment: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*

The third curriculum moment was the repackaging of the curriculum in 2010 which introduced the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education 2011). The CAPS document underscores the following principle, “valuing IKS, acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution” (DBE 2011:3). Kanu (2006) is of the perception that CAPS curriculum signalled a route towards curriculum reform which reconceptualised curriculum as more sensitive and responsive to multiplicity, difference, and identity affirmation. However, Hewson, Javu and Holtman (2009) still found that many teachers seemed to not be in favour of such a curriculum as it required more from them. These teachers indicate that they do not have access to adequate support for both pedagogic

and actual content knowledge of IKS integration in curriculum. This finding was confirmed by Ogunnyi (2007) and Govender (2009) as they found that many science teachers lack the relevant knowledge and skills and are thus not implementing curricula that includes IKS.

As with other curricula, CAPS was seen as very prescriptive and emulating education models of developed countries in a context that still grapples with increasing both physical (geographical locations) and epistemological (accessing knowledge in its various forms) access to all citizens. It was then problematic to introduce a curriculum that suggests uniformity in implementation across the nation with limited subject topics and concepts to be taught. This type of curriculum demonstrates Jansen's (2004) argument that, looking at what is happening in the formal education system, children have limited or no access to life saving knowledge or how to take care of their environments. Children also cannot learn about different cultures and languages plus knowledges embedded in these and there are no alternative ways of thinking and living, nor consideration and appreciation of difference.

Linked to the prescriptive nature of CAPS which demands uniformity in implementation, other scholars (Ramatlapana & Makonye 2012) found this curriculum to have rather compromised educator autonomy in affecting quality teaching. As such, its uniformity is monitored through the lesson plan checklist (Ramatlapana & Makonye 2012). This status minimises any opportunities for integration of IKS in everyday classroom practices given the findings that teachers are already struggling to integrate other knowledges due to inadequate training. Such findings lead one to agree with arguments which suggest that, at a policy level, the CAPS curriculum undergirds IKS to an extent but may also be seen as showing no commitment to embedding IK in implementation through its use of expressions such as "where applicable", "have used" etc (Gumbo 2016; Maluleka, Wilkinson & Gumbo 2006), as an example from the technology learning area. Such terminology use contradicts the earlier emphasis on the interrelationships between technology, society and the environment within the same learning area. For instance, as Gumbo (2016) argues, 'where applicable' perpetuates the downplaying of the value of IK by choosing whether they want to plan for it in their lessons and when not to. This means that IK will not necessarily always feature in all lessons where teachers design learning opportunities towards indigenous scenarios. This is especially possible given the current structure of chasing coverage of all prescribed lesson plans. Similarly, the use of the term "have used" as past tense perpetuates the notion that IK is static and is of the past (affirming the legacy of the modernity logic which located IK as existing outside the modern era). Teachers and students may thus be more likely to see no need to

learn it. Would such a situation not perpetuate notions of inferiority and backwardness of IK as imposed by modernists?

Similarly, science education as another learning area example demonstrates how the criticality of IK in CAPS is recognised in policy levels. However, educators are not receiving training on how to enact this integration. This is despite evidence shown by some studies that training improves confidence of educators in implementing IKS in different ways in the curriculum (Jacobs 2015). One could therefore conclude that CAPS is accommodative but to a limited extent. For instance, what Ramatlapana & Makonye (2012) also reveal as too much restriction and an inhibitor of educator autonomy may further serve to downplay the opportunities presented by the policy. Additionally, it may be the case that as long as proper educators' training which integrates IKS content and pedagogy is unavailable, educators may remain incapacitated to take advantage of this inviting atmosphere of CAPS.

The above rigid historic process of the education system opened an opportunity for what Paulo Freire called banking pedagogy whereby learners were (and still continue to be) seen as empty vessels devoid of any knowledge who patiently receive, memorize and repeat the information given (DasGupta et al. 2006). Freire described the banking model of education as "an act of depositing knowledge whereby the educator's job is to fill the empty accounts by making deposits of knowledge" (Freire 2002:72). The learners thus become passive recipients of predetermined curriculum content. These classroom processes are disempowering because they create students who play submissive roles in the social order. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) states that this situation manifests an identity crisis and a restrictive and programmatic way of thinking which is only informed by textbook knowledge. This kind of curriculum is domesticating in that it tames people into uncritical, unquestioning acceptance of things as they are, discouraging them from actively challenging the forces that keep them marginalised. Instead they mimic other ways of doing and thinking (Bhabha 1994; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) while being restricted in thinking from where they are. In the classroom setting, Freire critiques that "education becomes pure training, it becomes pure transfer of content from textbook, and it is almost like the training of animals and it is a mere exercise in adaptation to the world" (Freire 2004:84) thereby not developing critical thinkers who are constantly creating and validating knowledges in their local environments. It may be the case that centring IKs in such environments does not facilitate a space where different knowledges dialogue and coexist to assist with what Nyerere (1967) calls, an education for self-reliance.

### **3. The current status of the South African education system**

Despite the direction that we have taken as a country, the education crisis suggests a far more troubling and complex picture. This is because it entertains the rhetoric that without this formal education, people receive no other education at home and in their communities, which affords them skills for living. The implication often is that people with no formal education are considered as having no knowledge and being uneducated. The IKs created and practised within homes are not seen as valid knowledge systems. This status of education cannot be understood as an isolated event but as part of a history which continues to plague the present and future of black Indigenous people. An uncomfortable history of the duality between the primitive knowledge and the civilised objective knowledge.

Semali and Kincheloe (1999) assist in reminding us that, without an analysis of oppressive forces influencing this present era and the future, it would be difficult to understand why students succeed or fail in school; we will forever be blind to the tacit ideological forces that construct student perceptions of school and the impact that such have on student experiences. As alluded to in Chapter 3, such blindness will constantly restrict our view of our own and other people's perceptions of their place in history and in the web of reality as their history continues to be erased and decontextualized, rendering them vulnerable to the myths employed to perpetuate social domination (Semali & Kincheloe 1999). As Breidlid (2003) puts it, the status of the South African education system is indicative of a paradoxical picture that is painted with regard to the relationships between Indigenous culture, language education and measures to raise the quality of education. Despite being mentioned in various policies, Indigenous peoples' knowledges and world senses in South Africa continue to play a marginal role in the education of the country (Breidlid 2003; 2004). This, despite the fact that good education starts from where people are and is aligned to how people live (Mji 2012; Kaya & Seleti 2013; Jansen 2009).

### **4. Learning from other practices which used Indigenous education in formal education**

The contextualisation of education is significant to strengthen links between the learning environments of schools, home and community. Omolewa (2007) suggests that this can be done through building on the experience of the learner from outside the school and providing additional experience within the programme of the school. In this process, opportunities for

learners to integrate (centre) their own learning experiences is opened. Following are some of the case examples from various contexts where this centring happened.

In Cameroon, Bude (1985) observed that since the 1960s, primary schools in the Anglophone region have attempted to use the local environment to facilitate development of cognitive abilities, and to centre community development. This developed strong links between schools and local communities by supplying various services such as agricultural advice to farmers (Omolewa 2007).

In Ethiopia, a general polytechnic curriculum was piloted in 70 primary school (ICDR 1993). Local agricultural activities were used to facilitate learning in mathematics. Ethiopia also had a programme called the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) where holistic learning afforded learners an opportunity to make meaning of their surroundings through appropriate connections (PEAP 1996 cited in Omolewa 2007). Learners come with meaningful real life knowledge and experiences as prior knowledge which meets the knowledge introduced.

Chelu and Mbulwe (1994) described the Self-Help Action Plan for Education in Zambia which tried to improve and strengthen science, mathematics and language learning. Additionally, the programme targeted a wider variety of skills, e.g. literacy, numeracy as well as practical problem-solving skills. Omolewa (2007) described how this programme developed learners' potentialities (initiative, responsibility, creativity); positive attitudes (towards work, local culture and preservation of natural resources); and a balance of learning and working to suit individual interest and future needs to achieve quality and relevance.

Also in Zambia, the Northern Province's Kabale Primary School implemented an integrated, comprehensive approach which involved pre-adolescent school children in public health promotion at school and communities (Serpell 2008). School children were paired and shared responsibilities in the nurturing of selected pre-school age children. Growth charts and clinical health records were used as resources for learning mathematics and biology (Morley & Woodland 1988; Gibbs & Mutunga 1991 cited in Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali 2011). Children shared responsibilities for practical activities such as growing nutritious foods and bringing clean water to school. Active participation was the theme used for problem solving and the cultivation of social responsibility (Mumba 2000). Parents appreciated the promotion of responsible participation and students who were enrolled in Children-to-Children (CtC) classes performed well academically, compared to peers in non-CtC classes (Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali 2011).



The above examples have meaning for schooling curriculum. Duit (1991) opines that learning can only take place based on previously acquired knowledge since learning is an active construction process and learning has to do with constructing similarities between the new and the already known. When this happens, the syllabus subjects become the point of origin with the environment functioning as a teaching aid to illustrate academic themes and to serve as a practical site for applying the learned knowledge and skills (Mule 1999; Omolewa 2007; Quiroz 1999). Essentially, as Omolewa (2007) and Quiroz (1999) put it, this process follows the true philosophy of starting from the known to the unknown which is important if education is to be effective. To accomplish this art of using experience, teachers too need to be supported materially and psychologically to enable the development of strategies for contextualisation (Omolewa 2007). Teachers could use strategies like stories as teaching methods categorising them into themes in different subject areas. This would be an opportunity for schools to work together and consult Indigenous elders, parents, nurses, doctors and other community members by inviting them as guest co-teachers in class and during the development of curriculum. It would also encourage learners to learn from parents, and to appreciate and respect the home knowledge (Omolewa 2007). This would challenge the teacher's roles in that it would need to change from being a knowledge transmitter to a mediator and facilitator of learning. Secondly, "the expectation for the student would need to change from a passive receiver of knowledge to an autonomous learner, reflective thinker and problem solver, who is actively involved in his/her own learning and construction of knowledge" (Omolewa 2007: 609).

## **Conclusion**

There is a need for a holistic education which is concerned about humanity's needs in communities and in the world. Knowledge transmitted should reflect the real lives of those being educated. From this review, I conclude that the nature, design and structure of our education system still reflects a Western type and structure of education which is not accommodative of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and learning. I also argue that the transformation of the education system has only paid lip service to IKs and has been counter-productive to building ecologies of knowledges. It is for this reason, that, two decades post-apartheid, we are still fighting for the excluded and othered IKs.

## Chapter 5: Methodology

*“From the vantage point of the colonised, a position for which I write and choose to privilege, the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism...The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonised peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. Just knowing that someone measured our faculties by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought offends our sense of who and what we are. It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their encounters with some of us. It appalls us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of Indigenous people’s claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments. This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonised” (Smith 2012:1-2).*

## **Introduction**

The past three decades have involved enormous revolutionary work towards breaking away from the positivist approaches whereby the locus of power and control is firmly lodged with the researcher (Chilisa, 2012; Khupe & Keane 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 2010; Smith, 2012). Much of this contributed to the marginalisation of other epistemologies and ontologies. This work resulted in shifts in the way research is done as well as the underpinning frameworks and paradigms raising questions of power between the researcher and the participants. Notwithstanding Chilisa's (2012), Odora-Hoppers's (2004) and Smith's (2012) renowned texts, South Africa has yet to develop research methods aligned to IKS, with examples from its context (Khupe & Keane 2018). With a purpose to showcase how an authentic and nuanced research might look like for South Africa, this chapter comprises descriptions of methods as applied in this current study. It describes the Indigenous collaborative journey between the researcher and the communities during which rich data sources and approaches were adjusted accordingly to be culturally sensitive and responsive to the context.

Since the study setting is already presented in Chapter 1, this chapter commences with critical aspects that informed the position I took (the vantage point of AmaBomvane drawing from Smith's work) in conducting and writing up this study. This is the same position I have chosen to privilege in the methodological steps taken. Secondly, the chapter provides a description of an integrated case of narratives as the methodological design chosen to reach the aims and objectives. I then present information pertaining to participants including sampling and recruitment strategies and a description of the actual participants. A description of management of data and how it was analysed follows. Lastly, I describe how trustworthiness and authenticity were safeguarded as well as a discussion of ethical principles that ensure the integrity of the study. An entry from my reflective journal concludes the chapter as part of the reflexivity applied to the study.

### **1. Critical aspects that informed this methodology: The Indigenous research paradigm**

According to Smith (1999:2), Indigenous research methodologies invite us to problematise research and do research "as a significant site of struggle between the interest and knowing of the West and the interest and knowing of the Other". The Indigenous research paradigm, as located by Chilisa (2012) is a fifth paradigm alongside the four commonly known and used

paradigms namely; Positivist/postpositivist, Interpretive/constructivist, Transformative, and Pragmatic. Locating it as a fifth paradigm is in no way implying that indigenous methods never existed before the development of this paradigm as existence of indigenous ways of researching have long suffered silencing and recognition. Consequently, as Chilisa (2012) argues, the injustice of excluding knowledge production from formerly colonised and historically oppressed indigenous people, particularly those from rural contexts prevailed. Rather, I see it as a paradigm which comes to challenge and question the gaps of the existing, dominating and well known paradigms given the narrative that research traditions are predominantly founded on the philosophy and culture of Euro-Western thoughts (Chilisa 2012). Choosing this paradigm in this study communicates that we can no longer continue supporting the notion of producing studies that are constructed through the western gaze and its tools.

I was aware that this paradigm is able to combine and draw from theories located in other paradigms and that many indigenous studies are still within these dominating paradigms. However, my stance of positioning the fifth paradigm in its own right as aligned with Chilisa's contention is informed by the fact that, though adaptation can be made to the dominant paradigms by including our indigenous perspectives and traditions into their views and practices, the problem that remains is that the underlying beliefs of the paradigm cannot be removed. It is well known that paradigms are guided by philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, values and theoretical frameworks which converge to make up a particular methodology (Wilson 2008 cited in Chilisa 2012). I thus favoured Shawn Wilson's (2008) argument that inserting indigenous perspectives into one of the major paradigms is not always effective because it is hard to remove underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions on which paradigms are built.

Additionally, as an indigenous scholar and as part of charting alternative ways of researching and bringing forth the marginalised contribution to knowledge production of formerly colonised peoples, I believe it is critical to transcend this methodological "inclusion struggle" in order to effectively challenge the single narratives about indigenous people. Most importantly, such a stance enables the reading of colonialism by researchers from and within our realities or from the way we have experienced it, not through the western gaze. To me, it is important that we rightfully articulate our own research paradigms, our own approaches to research and own data collection methods as a significant part of decolonising methodology. Such a stance should thus not be understood as mere rejection.

For the above reasons, I argue that integrating IK perspectives in dominant paradigms like interpretivism may not have been the most effective strategy to legitimise world sense, histories, ways of knowing and experiences of the colonised and historically oppressed Indigenous people (Wilson 2008 cited in Chilisa 2012). I had the responsibility to critically assess the research process and see to it that it would allow AmaBomvane to communicate their realities from their own frame of reference. This responsibility entails privileging the colonised's ways of knowing. This indigenous research paradigm is an appropriate alternative to indigenising and decolonising western research. Additionally, looking at reasons for doing research in the two related but different paradigms, interpretivism is about understanding and describing human nature, whereas the indigenous research paradigm challenges lenses used on the formerly colonised, it interrogates imperial and colonial power in research and invokes IKSs to envision other ways of doing research as informed by the world senses of the colonised and historically marginalised groups (Chilisa 2012). As Chilisa (2012) and Smith's (2012) seminal work show, this is the process towards achievement of epistemic freedom. This implies that methodology forms an important part of the epistemic freedom struggle as many mainstream research still ignores other ways of knowing. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues (2018), rethinking thinking can therefore not be realised without decolonising methodology and research. Decolonising in research is therefore a way of conducting research in ways that give space for the world senses of the marginalised to communicate from experience. It is also a way of conducting research that will produce authentic results which do not oppress and misrepresent Indigenous peoples and their cultures (Smith 1999; Wilson 2008; Chilisa 2012). Essentially, the ethics of research lies in this thinking.

What the IK research paradigm also appreciates is the decolonial stance termed pluriversity – that is a task of re-founding our ways of thinking and a transcendence of the paradigmatic divisions (this is why it is integrative as I have applied it in my study). An Indigenous research paradigm is integrative, challenges the deficit thinking and pathologizing descriptions of the formerly colonised indigenous people and charts a process of envisioning other ways of doing research (Chilisa 2012). According to Chilisa, it is based on a relational ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. It is a well-known issue that various types of research have continued using culturally insensitive research designs and methodologies that are alien to the people and thus not aligning to the needs, customs and

values of Indigenous peoples and their communities (Arbour & Cook, 2006; Cook, 2006; Kolb, Wallace, Hill & Royce, 2006). With cognisance that research methodologies are tools for gate keeping (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), this is particularly of concern considering that it is the responsibility of researchers to not cause harm. However, inappropriate research methodologies and practices are well-documented in how they have contributed to distress for Indigenous people and their communities due to its implications, methods (Cadwell, Davis, Du Bois et al, 2005) and lack of responsiveness to the community and its concerns (Kolb, Wallace, Hill & Royce, 2006). As important as it is to gain the actual knowledge about a particular health condition, the ‘how to’ process of acquiring such knowledge in Indigenous communities is as critical for eliminating health disparities (Cochran et al. 2008). Thus, it is critical for researchers to continuously resolve the often-imposed conflict between the academic setting research values and those of the Indigenous community.

Indigenous research methodologies interrogate how we can conduct research that impacts positively on the communities (Chilisa 2012). Challenges in distributing the benefits of research is best illustrated by the Alaska native saying that “Researchers are like mosquitoes: they suck your blood and leave” reflecting the realisation of the little impact the body of research conducted in Indigenous communities around the world has had on the overall well-being of Indigenous people over years (Cadwell et al. 2005; Cook 2006 & Kolb et al. 2006; National Health and MRC 2007; Rigney 1999; Smith 1999). This is supported by Smith (1999), a Maori researcher, who argues that the organisations of academic knowledge in disciplines and fields of knowledge grounded in Western ways of knowing have proved to be inherently culturally insensitive to Indigenous communities. This is evident in how Western knowledge continues to interpret IK from a Western frame of reference, thus effectively distorting the reality of Indigenous people and the related knowledges.

Historically, the research propaganda within Indigenous communities has been inappropriate because of always serving to advance the colonial project politics (Cadwell et al. 2005) preoccupied with classifying and labelling in an attempt to manage Indigenous people (Dodson 1994). To date, as the decoloniality scholar Ndlovu-Gatsheni explains, the colonial matrices of power continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South. The perpetuation of the myth that Indigenous people represent a problem that is to be fixed and that are passive objects requiring assistance from outsiders has often been the significant impact of insensitive research (Smith 1999).

This perpetual epistemic violence is particularly a real threat to communities and Indigenous people being left feeling stigmatised by insensitive research because of the deficit focus of research. Another issue is related to exploitation of this knowledge gathered by not acknowledging that it is IK after gathering the data. For instance, the scarcity of research clearly identifying Indigenous people is clear evidence of such happenings. Reviews on Indigenous health point out this limitation in data reviewed (Anderson et al. 2016; King et al. 2009; Kirmayer & Brass 2016). Kirmayer and Brass (2016) also note that, even when data on Indigenous people is available, there remains concerns about how such data was collected and interpreted.

I therefore had to resist this dominant ideology and acknowledge the need for transformative research. I used the Postcolonial Indigenous framework (Chilisa 2012) to guide and offer some insights as I was adapting my methodology. To avoid perpetuating self-serving Western research paradigms that construct Western ways of knowing as superior to the ‘Othered’ (such as Indigenous) ways of knowing- I positioned myself as a transformative healer as informed by Chilisa’s work on conducting Indigenous research guided by the four R’s of research: Accountable Responsibility, Respect, Reciprocity and Rights and regulations of the researched (Chilisa 2012). These principles guided the methodological steps and informed the ethics and trustworthiness of the study. Essentially, this standpoint encouraged an I/We relationship as opposed to the I/You individualistic nature of Western research.

Using this Postcolonial Indigenous framework, I adjusted the study methods and research process to ensure that it was not alien to the Indigenous ways of the study site. This was part of being resistant to methodological imperialism. Chilisa (2012) reminds us that one of the shortfalls of Euro-Western research is that it ignores the role played by imperialism, colonisation and globalisation in the construction of knowledge. Understanding the values and assumptions embedded by this study was important to allow me to be critical of the imperial power carried through research thereby reducing the risk of continued othering of Indigenous people. Building the relationships in the study site with participants was important through a process called community entry. Positioning myself as an insider by participating in some of the village life allowed me to understand the community culture, values, traditions and participants from the position of being an insider. This positioning however does not take away the fact that being a researcher positions one (including insiders)



in a complex way to the community. This step allowed me to reject the binary of researcher as knower or redeemer and the researched as the problem, objects/subjects (Chilisa 2012). Through reflexivity, I also became a data source in order to tell my own transformative journey through this study. This process strengthened the partnership between myself and the participants. Aligned with the Indigenous framework, the community guided the research process and approaches to ensure that there was no imposing and that methods used were not violent and inappropriate to the context. The study positioned itself in the sense that it allowed participants and the community to have a say about how they wanted to be represented and acknowledged in the study for their knowledges. Lastly, methods were chosen carefully to allow participants to reclaim their power and have control of what they want to share, how to share as well as how the shared knowledge can be presented.

## 2. Research design

Within the qualitative methodology, I used a descriptive exploratory case study design that is supported by the narrative enquiry and Indigenous data collection methods. The Indigenous methods brought a participatory approach into these methodological frameworks to engage the community in the research process, and to minimise the risk of further contributing to the marginalisation of Indigenous ways of knowing. Recently, progress related to not harming Indigenous communities has been seen through use of participatory procedures (Cochran et al. 2008; Cook 2007; Smith 1999). Chilisa (2012) also states that, Indigenously, a research is considered respectful when it engages and benefits the community. For this reason, the work of Smith (who is an Indigenous Maori researcher on decolonising methodologies) as well as Chilisa (who is an Indigenous Motswana with her work on Indigenous research methodologies) significantly informed and influenced how I framed my methodology. My purpose was to present a methodology that is relevant, context specific and appropriate to the AmaBomvane in order to make their voices visible.

### 2.1 Case study design

I concluded that the **case study design** as a tradition of qualitative inquiry was relevant because it provided boundedness of the study while situating each group in its historical, political, economic and socio-cultural contexts, thus demanding multiple sources of data collection (Stake 1998, 2008; Yin 2003). Using a similar tradition of inquiry, Ramugondo

(2012) tracked children's play across three generations within one Venda family to examine how children and adults negotiated a shared notion of valued play. Her study demonstrated how a case study is particularly suited to gain in-depth understanding into how a situation comes about or unfolds over time (Stake 2008). For this reason and aligned with the purpose of this study, this case study firstly enabled use of culturally sensitive and responsive methods to the community needs, as guided by the study site key informants (community leaders). This type of inquiry also enabled an exploration of holistic and meaningful, context-related knowledge and understandings about real life events of AmaBomvane (Yin 2009). The case in this study was the relevance of AmaBomvane's knowledges while formal education foregrounded the case thus contributing to the boundedness of the case. The case influences both the transformation of formal education as well as better health and well-being of AmaBomvane. Such a position follows Stake's (2008:121) view of a case study as "both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry". The case's context, boundedness and process help in making sense of the case from multiple perspectives.

This case study was merely approached, as Stake (2008) suggested, as the 'object of study' and not so much how it is studied. The case study also provided contextual boundedness and situatedness to the research. An additional lens was thus needed to approach data collection and analysis. Narrative inquiry was the additional lens which uncovered the stories that formed the basis for describing what this single case study is a case of. When merged, these two methodological frameworks allowed for a case of narratives about the potential relevance of IKs in transforming the formal education system for better health and wellbeing.

## *2.2 Narrative inquiry*

In its simplest form, narrative inquiry is often defined as the study of experience as story (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). Narrative Inquiry as a design that seeks to describe human action through stories was best suited to inform methods for obtaining the knowledges of AmaBomvane (Polkinghorne 1995). Story telling is an integral powerful method in gathering IKs. Smith (2012) reports that the method of storytelling is best understood by a poet and storyteller - Simon Ortiz who attests that storytelling is as much about education as entertainment because when we speak, we use language conceptually. For him, it is through storytelling that our knowledges, history, beliefs and values are passed down from one generation to another. The method is holistic in that it draws on different generations

allowing both the story teller and the story to serve in connecting the past with the future, one generation with the other, land with the people and people with the story (Smith 2012). This process allowed for the backward and forward movement that the key leaders of this Indigenous community proposed as a way forward to representing multiple truths (Mji 2012). For instance, the older people had to draw from their IK whereas those who have been to school had to draw from the modern knowledges coming in through formal schooling. In this study, storytelling was positioned as a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the often silenced diversities of truth within which AmaBomvane retained control as the narrators (Bishop 1996 cited in Smith 2012). As Chilisa (2012) and Kovach (2009) posit, stories are integral to IK research methodologies. For this study, these stories served as both a method and meaning-making because of their connectedness to knowing.

It is for these reasons that storytelling was the main method used within this study. Chilisa (2012) states that stories are central to the lives of Indigenous people and are used to collect, deposit, analyse, store, educate and disseminate information as well as instruments for socialisation. The latter was an important aspect in the research process because it foregrounded the responses given by AmaBomvane regarding processes of knowledge production and education within the home as a primary learning space and as a classroom. The socialisation stories were thus important in understanding the participants' frame of reference, practices and values of the society (Chilisa 2012). It is important that researchers too, acknowledge stories as circulating literature that is accessible to all and which informs the day-to-day experiences and practices of Indigenous people.

This case of narratives was an appropriate integrative design which best suited the theoretical and conceptual stance of the study which assumes knowledge and beings as contextual, situated and relational (Chilisa 2011; Foucault 1970).

Reflecting on my choice of using integrative merged methodologies, as it is a similar case with mixed methods (Mertens 2011), I contend that merged methodologies are important for methodological triangulation, especially to provide a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon studied. More so, I found that the merged method approach provided a foundation for safe spaces for multiple perspectives and voices to dialogue and theorise about their realities as well as critique that which has been theorised about them. Linked to this is the base for capturing the contextual complexities, with an intention to privilege the

knowledges and beliefs of Indigenous people as well as providing a platform for authentic engagement as supported by Mertens (2011).

For instance, the case study research design specifically allowed for use of a range of data sources to understand a phenomenon within its context. While the case study was good for uncovering contextual conditions that are relevant to the phenomenon especially when the boundary between the phenomenon and the context was not clear, it also contributed significantly to the thick data required for rigour in qualitative research. The case of narratives enabled Indigenous people to first communicate from their frame of reference and secondly take control of this process of sharing/not sharing. It is within this reasoning that the indigenous research paradigm was best suited and important to challenge and transform these conventional ways of producing knowledge.

However, beyond strengthening understanding of the phenomenon and given the historic process of conducting research which has been oppressive to indigenous people, I concluded that merged methods allow one to consciously use methods as an approach for social change. This brings an aspect of intent when conducting research to the forefront. This integrative design deliberately anchored culturally safe practices in the methodology as afforded by merged methodologies with an intent and willingness to consciously confront power imbalances in the research process early on. This is an important step to be noted by all researchers (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) because critical reflexivity can only contribute to reforming and decolonising research when it addresses deeper systemic and power issues akin to the dominant white culture in institutions of research. The four common principles of indigenous methodologies (relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriations, and rights and responsibilities) together with Wilson's (2008) six guiding questions compliment and certainly provide an appropriate guide for indigenising and decolonising research.

These six questions are;

1. "How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic I am studying and myself as researcher (on multiple levels)?"
2. How do my methods build respectful relationships between myself and the other research participants?
3. How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea that we will share?

4. What is my role as researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?
5. Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to other participants, to the topic and to all of my relations?
6. What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal”? (Wilson’s 2008:77).

I suggest that this merged method design provides one opportunity for all researchers to be part of an ongoing transformative process of conducting research with those who have been exposed to the colonial and dehumanising nature of research.

### **3. Community entry**

The main premise for my community entry was to start building relationships and involve the community in the research process from the beginning, to ensure that the study is beneficial and responsive to the community needs. I mentioned earlier in this thesis that Indigenous research is about reciprocity and relationships. As observed by Indigenous researchers (Ndimande 2012; Vakalahi & Tiapa 2013), establishing respectful and authentic connections with the community is integral to achieving respectful research. These relationships also demonstrate collective coexistence or relational ontology and collective responsibility (Chilisa 2012; Khupe & Keane 2017). This relationship building also enabled negotiation and co-designing of the research purpose (Khupe & Keane 2017) as aligned with the relational Indigenous paradigm chosen for this study. Additionally, community entry assisted to facilitate what Weber calls – an attempt to understand participants from their own perspective (Haralambos & Holbron 1995) through looking, listening, and learning upon entry to the community. This process further strengthened the proposal development stage while it also ensured a true reflection of the context and its concerns. Lastly, it ensured that the selected methodological approaches were contextually relevant in terms of its methods and processes followed and respectful to the people, values and practices.

I commenced community entry in mid-2015 (during concept building phase) when my main supervisor, Associate Professor Gubela Mji took me to the study site to introduce me to the leaders of the villages. We stayed at Madwaleni Hospital, where we were accommodated by a speech therapist who was working at the hospital. My main supervisor had gone there to disseminate her PhD findings to the healthcare practitioners. These research findings are what this study emanated from.

We visited again in December 2015. During this visit, we met with leaders and elders of all villages (known as key informants) introducing the study again in detail. It is during this time that permission was granted by the community leadership and the study was well received. The community permission was sought prior to seeking ethics approval from the university. The purpose of this act was to enable the community to actively participate in the design and decisions of an ethics that is appropriate and respectful to them. Additionally, to challenge the institutional, often narrow and colonial, framings of ethics (Sabati 2018). Sabati further states that these are “matters of practising better social inquiry; that is, not matters of individual choice, but of collective action and ethical practice” (2018:6). The leaders gave perspective to the issues they are facing with the schooling system and their knowledges as rationale for the study. I also got an opportunity to build relationships at the schools. I successfully received contact details of the school heads which I saved for use later. These details were key for planning purposes to ensure that I included all participants in the planning and would come at a convenient time for everyone.

The random village conversations which are often excluded by research methodologies, especially when initiated by the participants, were a powerful process of building relationships and trust with AmaBomvane, and with the older people in particular. Even for Indigenous researchers, negotiating entry could be a daunting affair as we are sometimes caught up with the formal approaches as imposed by the institutions of research thus reiterating the whole ugly history of research on Indigenous communities (Smith, 2012). During this process, I had AmaBomvane elders who wanted to start giving their responses and interrupting this process may be perceived as disrespectful and controlling people when to speak or not.

The community entry stage informed the sampling and recruitment of participants process.

#### **4. The process of linking with participants in the villages**

Aligned with the Indigenous ways of living, the chief was an entry to the community. Through respecting this process, there was a collaborative way of conducting research activities. I therefore followed ways of the community as models of best ethical practices that honour and respect Indigenous ways of living. This was where I was guided by the chief (who understands the community very well in terms of its strengths and weaknesses) regarding accessing key people of the village to speak to. Therefore, combinations of

purposive and snowballing sampling were used to select and access participants as guided by the villages' leadership structures in the following ways:

Firstly, the chiefs started introducing the study to the whole community through an Imbizo (communal gathering). Community members advised who was best suited to participate in the study. Secondly, the chief linked me with Sisi Vuvu<sup>9</sup>, a health worker at the Donald Wood Foundation. She was the key person who was asked to assist identify a person who will assist me to navigate the community. I was then paired up with Noluthando<sup>10</sup> (who is a young makoti<sup>11</sup>- middle generation) to act as my co-researcher. Noluthando was born and bred in one of the villages of Hobeni and married in another village within Hobeni. She became my greatest supporter because of her understanding of the villages thus purposefully selecting relevant participants for the study as well as relevant approaches for recruiting these participants. She became the liaison person between myself and the participants while I was in and out of the villages. She also assisted in further orientating me to the villages' ways, values and practices which contributed to providing a dense description of the context and methods. This was a critical component of this case study of narratives which contributes to rigour. She also played the role of doing the actual data collection process and was an asset in explaining some concepts I did not understand during the data collection process. Lastly, her experience in the village strengthened the continuous process of building relationships and trust between myself and the participants. This collaborative process contributed to triangulation which enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Both of these processes (collaborating with the chiefs and Noluthando) allowed for a mix of selecting participants purposefully as well as through snowballing whereby the leadership and participants who had information about the study helped identify other people who they believed had information on the phenomenon under study (Chilisa 2012).

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<sup>9</sup> Her real name as preferred by her.

<sup>10</sup> Her real name as preferred by her.

<sup>11</sup> Makoti is a Xhosa word referring to a daughter-in-law



## 5. Reciprocal training and relationship building with co-researcher

The training<sup>12</sup> between my co-researcher Noluthando and I was reciprocal in the sense that I was learning from her and she was learning from me. She taught me various ways and approaches of the village while I trained her to be a co-researcher in the enquiry. I focused on study aims, objectives, methods and principles. I had a manual with these details prepared in isiXhosa and we used it step by step to go through the research process and how she fits in as a co-researcher in terms of her roles and expectations. This process was followed by detailing the research questions and identifying important aspects to cover during data collection. The co-researcher also got an opportunity to contribute where she thought a particular structure would not work for the community. Lastly, a structure on how to manage information and consent forms was covered.

We then practised on each other, for instance the interviewing process and how to facilitate the talking circles and interviews. In this process, she got to reflect about the study too and contribute to methodological adjustments. For instance, she mentioned that it will be difficult to do talking circles in some villages because some older people stay far from one another and no longer walk distances. It then became clear that we had to facilitate some of these narratives by individuals in their own homes. Additionally, she noted that though it may be mostly women who are the custodians of these knowledges, there were older men in the villages who may make a critical contribution to the study objectives as they are knowledgeable about AmaBomvane ways of living and knowing. The figure below shows some of the pictures taken during this training.

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<sup>12</sup> The training was collaboratively facilitated by myself and a peer who was also doing her doctoral study at the same villages and also needed to go through training with her co-researcher. This is why figure 3 below shows an additional participant and facilitator.

## Training research assistants



*Figure 3: Training with co-researcher*

I also used this time to negotiate working hours and remuneration for Noluthando to avoid any misunderstandings and for her to raise any concerns she may have. Remuneration was sought as guided by the university's hourly rates for research assistants.

## 6. Study population and sampling

### 6.1 Sampled villages of Xhora

Consistent with the case study approach, intensity sampling was used to first identify villages in which the phenomenon of interest is strongly represented (Chilisa 2012). From the nine identifiable clusters of villages in Xhora, approximately three clusters are close to the sea, another three are situated more in the middle, and three are closer to the main roads. Each cluster is governed by both a village chief and a counsellor. The key criterion was to select villages in a manner that would ensure information-rich sources and seek maximum variation that accounts for diversity existing within the villages. Thus, four clusters of villages (See summary in table below) were purposefully selected:

- Madwaleni (area known as Gusi) located right in the middle surrounding the hospital,
- Nkanya and Hobeni both located towards the sea, and
- Xhora village closer to the main roads and town.

Some contextual incidences that influenced the sampling of the villages was the geographical issue as a legacy of apartheid with services located far away from some villages while being

closer to others (Mji 2012). Additionally, the Eastern Cape generally has a majority of people still struggling to gain easy access to schooling or healthcare due to the long distances they have to travel. Children either end up starting school at a later age or some drop out due to being fed up with the distances they travel daily. Some choose not to go to school at all. This was an important factor contributing to situating a case study. However, there was also a perception that schooling does not reflect their realities, and this has influenced decisions not to go to school. In these different clusters of villages, there was a mix of all these groups. In the furthest villages, the majority of community members have never been through any formal education and still relied heavily on their own Indigenous ways of knowing and living. Their children walk distances and cross rivers to get to school. The villages in the middle came with a mix of people straddling between use of Indigenous ways and modern ways of living. The villages closer to the town were mostly relying on the modern ways of living having let go of some of their Indigenous ways (only turning to their Indigenous ways during critical events). This group mostly has access to electricity, taps and/or water tanks and are mostly staying in big cemented houses. There was therefore a need to get perspectives from these different localities hence the importance of intensity sampling.

*Table 1: Summary of sampled villages with participants*

Names of villages	Nkanya	Hobeni	Madwaleni / Gusi	Xhora
Groups of participants				
<b>Older people</b>	5 older people (3 men and 2 women)	8 participants (4 men and 4 women)	3 participants (2 women and 1 man)	1 talking circle group (All women)
<b>Youth</b>	None	1 talking circle group (6 girls)  NB: boys refused to participate.	1 talking circle group (1 boy, 3 girls)	None found
<b>Teachers</b>	None	4 teachers interviewed individually (including principal and deputy principal)  1 focus group consisting of 5 teachers	2 teachers (1 teacher from the TVET college and 1 teacher from a high school)	2 teachers
<b>Middle generation</b>	1 talking circle group (4 Makotis)	2 participants (wife and husband)	2 participants (both are makoti's in the area)	1 talking circle group (5 IYA women)

### *6.2 Sampled older people as custodians of AmaBomvane knowledges*

Consistent with the IKS framework, older people are the custodians of the community's knowledge (Mji 2012). From each village, I purposefully ensured the representation of the older people as key informants and first data sources (Chilisa 2012). This included those in leadership structures within the villages, both men and women as well as both those who attended and those who never attended formal schools. Adults selected per cluster ranged between four to ten per cluster consisting of both the older adults and the middle

generation<sup>13</sup>. However, it is important to note that the majority of the middle generation was mostly absent due to migration to the cities to seek employment or going to visit their husbands who have migrated for employment purposes. I therefore did not get many participants from the middle generation as planned. Those who were available also did not share much, stating that they do not really know much about how knowledges are or used to be facilitated. This could be attributed to being newlyweds in the area. It could also be attributed to the findings that these young wives were not staying with their mothers-in-law but separately, implying that the transference of local knowledge and guidance of the mother-in-law regarding the ways and knowledges of the village was missing. It is a common practice nowadays where young wives are running away from staying with the in-laws as staying with them is perceived as putting one in a position of working too much (Mji 2012). This argument was linked to what older women in Mji's study said about children being further alienated from their ways and interpreting home life as hard and abusive under the lens of human rights.

This contributes to what is referred to as generational gaps. The middle generation found themselves not able to transfer any IKs while the older generation is also dying with this knowledge. Where grandparents were available while the middle generation is in the cities, grandparents were left to fulfil the roles of the middle generation within many homes. The present middle generation has mostly let go of the village ways of living as they perceived them as hard labour and backward. Nonetheless, it was good to include the middle generation as Castiano and Mkabela (2014) support the intention behind the diversification of groups to gather not only Indigenous knowledge, but also the learning needs that will complement IK in the area.

Given the qualitative Indigenous ways of researching as a paradigmatic location of the study, the issue of representation in terms of taking big numbers from each village was not applicable or not an important factor. This study was about looking for participants with rich information until 'data adequacy' (Morrow 2005) is reached (hence the purposive and snowballing sampling). The sampling strategies were easy to use given that people knew each other in each household as well as who the key people were. I concur with Masuku (2011) when she says, in rural African communities or villages, people still live under the notion of a village constituting a family hence they know one another very well. The

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<sup>13</sup> I used this term to refer to the existence of daughter-in-law's in the villages

methodology of this study as it was framed rejected the Western method of knowing people and construction of family which is (in Western terms) reduced to merely the extended family.

It was only in Xhora where I was not able to speak to the chief as he was not staying in the village and was not available throughout all the visits. However, he gave permission for going ahead working closely with his extended family which assisted with accessing participants. In all other villages, chiefs were staying in the villages and were easily accessible. The presence of the village leaders and their inclusion from the beginning of the study made the process easy to navigate. The Maori researchers in New Zealand demonstrate the importance of being inclusive of communities in research in order to conduct research that demonstrates both scientific robustness, cultural terms and validity. For example, a study looked at surveying nutritional status of children under 15 years of age and included elders who were designated as spiritual guardians to perform ceremonies to render laboratories safe before any tests could be done. This was a good case study where the beliefs of participants were endorsed as the study was dealing with critical things like urine and blood of people. At the same time, fears related to misuse of their bodily fluids were minimised (Durie 1985, 2004; Durie & Kingi 1998).

### *6.3 Sampled schools and education officials*

In Xhora, there are approximately twenty schools (primary and high schools) and one TVET college. One high school and one primary school for each cluster and the TVET college on its own were purposefully selected. From each of the primary and high school schools per cluster, the following happened:

Purposeful sampling was used to access teachers and principals who were available for the interview during the allocated time. I initially wanted to get retired teachers involved as well but I did not get any in the villages. This would have added richness in data because they have been part of the system and would now be analysing it from the outside. Reasons for not accessing retired teachers is related to the finding that most teachers in the schools of Xhora are not from these villages. They are mostly outsiders who commute from Umtata daily. This is why random purposeful sampling worked best depending on who was available as they travel back to the city after school daily.

DoE officials proved to be the hardest to get hold of, even getting permission from the district office was quite a long process of many emails and calls not being responded to until I physically went to the offices. When I got to the offices, I still did not get an official signed letter but an official stamp of the department (to indicate approval) on the consent and information letter I had drafted as well as verbal approval.

#### *6.4 Sampled youth of Xhora*

Youth (inclusive of those attending school, those who had dropped out of school, and those who had already completed school) in the villages were purposefully selected to give their perceptions about the knowledges they learn at school and at home, and how they are experiencing the connection or disconnection between the two knowledge spaces. The plan was to include youth from both the high schools and the TVET college, however it was difficult to get college students who are AmaBomvane. I found that AmaBomvane students apply to other colleges to change scenery and the ones I found at the Gusi TVET were from other areas, outside Xhora. I then had to exclude them from the study. The anticipated age group was between thirteen years and the early twenties as this is the estimated ages for high school goers. Like many Indigenous people and linked with the resettlement challenges of apartheid, AmaBomvane are very mobile especially the young generation migrating to cities to either access better schooling or to look for employment. This factor contributed to not accessing a number of learners. Additionally, the issues of increased alcohol abuse with youth spending a lot of time in taverns, as older people claimed in Mji's study, and as I have observed it through my visits impacted on accessing this young generation. This was worse with young men and resulted in having only one young man participating in this group of participants. Additionally, it is mostly the young men who are migrating for job opportunities compared to women.

### **7. Data gathering methods and process**

All talking circles, interviews and spontaneous conversations were carried out by both the researcher and co-researcher.

#### *7.1 Talking circles with key custodians (older people)*

Talking circles were used with key older people. Talking circles are Indigenous circles used in most African settings for daily meetings. These circles promote equality among



participants and symbolise sharing of ideas, respect for each other's ideas and continuous compassion for one another which are key values in the community as described under study setting (Chilisa 2012). A common practice in talking circles is the use of appropriate objects which are passed around the circle from speaker to speaker. This object symbolises the collective construction of knowledge and relations between group members (Chilisa 2012). The greatest structure of talking circles was that while one person (holder of the object) was narrating a story, the group listened silently and nonjudgmentally without interrupting. When the narrator finished, he or she passed the object to the next person in the circle. The purpose of these talking circles was to first understand the experiences of AmaBomvane with the formal schooling and secondly identify knowledges which could improve the alienating schooling experience. I did about four rounds per talking circle.

For most older people in Hobeni, Nkanya and Gusi Villages, it was difficult to bring the sampled groups together as they stayed far from each other. The co-researcher and I opted for individual interviews to get these participants to share their stories which were then combined to form one village story. The sagacity approach was used to trigger discussions in these talking circles and individual interviews (Chilisa 2012). The philosophic sagacity approach is a reflective system of thought which is based on wisdoms and traditions of people (Emagalit 2001 cited in Chilisa 2012). Excerpts asserted by older women and of most relevance to this follow-up study were taken from Mji's (2012) study to trigger the contribution of the participants (both in a circle and individually). Probing questions were used to further facilitate discussion and ensure that key aspects were all covered in discussions.

## *7.2 Interviews with teachers and principals*

After understanding the experiences and key knowledges from the custodians, I interviewed the teachers and principals to get an understanding of the knowledges taught in schools, how they are speaking to the identified home knowledges and to find out how teachers are or are not integrating these home knowledges in the classrooms. As part of aligning with what older people perceived as key for education of their children, I referred to excerpts from the narratives of older people thus applying the sagacity approach in the interviewing method as well. These conversations with older people were used as data trigger points for conversations with teachers. This yielded rich data which was triangulated for further analysis.

Key issues that emerged from the older people were shared with teachers briefly following what Castiano & Mkabela (2014) call a process of negotiating, evaluating, validating and raising awareness of where the other group is with their thinking and to open a space for argumentative dialogue. This process was helpful in grounding the conversations. Key assertions were also drawn from these interviews to be presented back to the talking circles of key older people for further synthesis of the potential relevance of their IKs. This follows the notions of reporting back and sharing knowledge as important aspects of knowledge dissemination for they assume the principles of reciprocity and feedback (Smith 2012). These were important principles for maintaining the ethics of the study. I did not position reporting back as a once off exercise or a task assigned only at the end of research. My methodology was designed in a manner that allowed for this reporting and sharing of knowledge to be a continuous process (Smith 2012). This also included reporting back to and sharing knowledge with the leaders on the progress of research and what the highlights and challenges were. This is aligned to the ethical principles of ‘Relational Accountability, Respectful Representation, Reciprocal appropriation and Rights and Responsibilities’ (Chilisa 2012).

Smith (2012) posits that it is useful to see this process as sharing knowledge because our role as researchers and academics goes beyond sharing surface information but to share theories and analyses which inform the way the knowledge and information are constructed and represented. She advocates a sharing of knowledge process because it introduces those who have never been to any formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concerns in similar sorts of ways. When we do this as researchers, we contribute to demystifying and decolonising as I have done in this study by connecting these two learning spaces which have been holding asymmetrical relationships filled with mistrust, tension, and conflict (Smith 2012).

### *7.3 Talking circles with youth*

The last part of this study was to conduct talking circles with youth to hear their perspectives on how they are experiencing the formal schooling as well as the home/community in affirming or alienating their cultural identities and base. Photos of activities taken from the community and those shown by elders were used with the youth as a discussion trigger of

narratives and to affirm what their elders have shared. Photographs can be seen as a form of story telling and are particularly effective as a resource for narrative inquiry (Harrison 2002). Youth could decide which photos they wanted to focus their narratives on to describe their experiences of disconnect.

Consistent with the ontological and epistemological standpoint of the study, the use of photographs was a powerful data collection tool that put power into the hands of the youth. The essence of this data was to understand how youth negotiated and navigated their educational experiences both in communities and at school. Such data is integral if we are to ensure what Shizha (2013) postulates as a school knowledge that aligns itself with students' experiences which are characterised by their socio-cultural sense of the world.

#### *7.4 Spontaneous observations and photographs*

Observations and taking photographs were also informal data sources throughout the research process, in between interviews and during other spontaneous or arranged times with community members. Cloete (2012) and Mji (2012) demonstrated how observations can be used and narrowed down to incidences that relate to general beliefs, norms and general practices by individuals and groups of people. The conversations with the older people influenced what pictures I captured. I captured how they use nature to sustain their lives. I also captured activities demonstrating skills and knowledges transferred in these villages to sustain living well. Using these pictures to assist with providing thick description of the context was the strength of observations as a method of data collection because they are contextual and therefore can cover the case's context (Stake 1998, 2008).

The one weakness of observations relates to reflexivity whereby actions may proceed differently because they are being observed. This weakness was addressed by observing as an insider. My prolonged stay in the site provided opportunities to be involved in the activities of the village. I spent informal time with two families, one was a weekend including sleep over and the other was mainly day visits with informal spontaneous conversations. Walking around with Noluthando and some youth around the village also contributed to this reflexivity aspect of research as I managed to observe the villages (See figure below for pictures captured). Though some participation in activities happened spontaneously, I asked to be included in other activities of the village and these observations and reflections assisted with making sense of the narratives in discussion and conclusion chapters.

## Spontaneous conversations and walking around in Hobeni Village



*Figure 4: Being part of Hobeni village*

During observations I took photographs which were helpful to use during the story telling as data trigger tools to generate stories with the youth and get an understanding of where and when such activities are done, what it meant for them and what knowledges are shared when participating in such activities. This space was not structured but informal with participants generally directing the spontaneous conversations as they explained about the activities we were involved in. One key value of AmaBomvane and may apply in many rural areas was that of looking after and admiring visitors (as I was seen as a visitor). In fact, this value is traced from way back in terms of how Africans relate with people and is evident in the isiXhosa saying “iindwendwe ziyabukwa” (direct translation saying- visitors are admired). So, every time I visited, some families really wanted and requested that I stay with them instead of staying separately. I opted to then spend some weekends with one family in Nkanya and we would make dinner together and all sit as a family. The conversations that took place at these shared spaces were not limited to what the study was about but generally flowed from one aspect to another with older people sharing mostly about concerns they have regarding their villages (See figure below). In fact, I tried to not bring up the study at all but focused on building relationships and learning about AmaBomvane in context.

## Being part of a family in Nkanya Village



*Figure 5: Nkanya village, being part of the family*

Such built relationships enabled me, as a researcher, to build my credibility and trust with the villagers which was not only reciprocated but constantly negotiated through continuous engagement with the villagers (Smith 2012). Often, the extended conversations as initiated by the participants allowed for this process. The process strengthened my connections with the site and made it easy for me to navigate being an outsider within the villages and position myself accordingly as working with and not in the community. It also helped me make sense of the data as it was being unpacked in different spaces in different formats. Of equal importance, these shared spaces assisted in constantly ensuring that the research was responsive to the concerns as raised by the villages (Smith 2012). This process laid foundations for applying the four Rs (Relational Accountability, Respectful Representation, Reciprocal appropriation and Rights and Responsibilities) by Chilisa (2012), to ensure a balanced visibility of participants' voices and perceptions and ensuring trustworthiness and ethics. Applying these principles assisted in avoiding a case where this study could become another colonial research as experienced by Indigenous people that steals knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who stole it (Smith 2012). These principles will be described more in the following sections of this chapter.

### *7.5 The researcher as a data source*

Linking with the above method, *the reflective process and reflexivity was strengthened* in the following process. I, as the researcher acted as a data source through narrating my own story

relating to my identity and how I relate to the study. This foregrounded my own positionality within the study and located the connection I have with community and its people.

Reflexivity is a strategy that helped to ensure that my closeness to the study is not a threat to the credibility (Chilisa 2012). Therefore, I kept a journal of my observations, steps taken, feelings, fears and thoughts throughout the study. The experiences of participating in the communal activities, experiencing the village life and reflecting from my own experiences of being involved were all recorded in a journal. My peer, co-researcher and supervisor were available to listen or hear about the contents of my journaling. These included new observations relating to the study, concerns, doubts about the data emerging and any change of plans due to weather forecast, features of distance and any other changing conditions like the unavailability of people. Though these changing processes seemed to be at odds with the limiting research timelines and resource constraints, Khupe and Keane (2017) emphasise their necessity. Khupe and Keane position the taking of time as a mark of respect and indicates the value of an activity in Indigenous communities.

My co-researcher was particularly supportive and served tirelessly as a “cultural consultant” (Vakalahi & Taipa 2013:403), not only in assisting me to make sense and gain clarity on the content and some practices cited in the narratives but also in ensuring prior understanding of how I am to approach each household, where to sit and how to introduce self. This meant being open to looking, listening and learning from AmaBomvane ways of doing thus avoiding seeing myself as the researcher who is the expert and knower studying the researched. This was the way in which colonisers used to study the colonised Indigenous people.

## **8. Data management**

A recording device was used to capture the narratives and I also made notes of the interview process after each interview. The identities of the participants were protected by coding all data and removing their names and replacing these with pseudonyms. However, this only applied to those who wanted their identities hidden. All data was first transcribed verbatim to prepare for member-checking. Both the research assistant and I understand the Indigenous language of the participants; therefore, we went through all the transcripts and recordings to ensure that data was captured effectively. After checking, all data was sent for translation by an independent translator and each transcript was coded using numbers for villages and



pseudonyms for individuals. This naming was done to maintain confidentiality and this detail was recorded in my journal to ensure alignment with the real names after translation.

However, when I checked the translations to ensure that no meaning was lost from data, I discovered that most of the translations were incorrect and thus lost meaning. Though services of translation were well sought in advance, I still could not escape these common challenges related to translation. I therefore had to re-translate the data with assistance from my co-researcher. This broke the initial plan of wanting to remove myself a bit from the process and take time to reflect about data collection which had just been completed. Another factor in not doing translations was the fact that I did not have the luxury of time as I was working full time while doing the study on a part time basis. Nonetheless, during the process of self-translating, I minimised the danger of cooking data in the subsequent translation by starting with co-mapping the narratives in isiXhosa with my co-researcher. I then translated these to English and asked my co-researcher to check it. In cases, where I did not know or needed further explanation to avoid losing cultural meaning, the co-researcher was an asset. Additionally, member checking with participants was done with isiXhosa data, then the co-researcher was assigned by the community to check the translated versions. Youth and teachers were comfortable with English during member checking and their interviews were usually in a mix of isiXhosa and English.

The audiotapes and transcriptions were kept in a lockable cabinet in my office and only I had access to these documents and files. The electronic copies were put in an electronic file with a code known only by me. Raw data will be destroyed after five years, which is the stipulation of the institution in which this study was carried out.

## **9. Data analysis**

Qualitative analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon 2005:1278). Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysing qualitative data. However, aligning with my methodological framework (a case study supported by the narrative inquiry), it was appropriate that I use a narrative analysis approach as the first step towards organising the stories of AmaBomvane in a manner that supports fully positioning them as the retainers of control in the story telling process. Chilisa’s (2012) relational paradigm’s four Rs of relational accountability, respectful



representation, reciprocal appropriation and rights and responsibilities, as well as Smith's (2012) work on indigenising methodologies mainly informed all the methodological steps I took to ensure the centring of Indigenous people. Research is respectful when it benefits the community. In this way and aligned with IKS as the grounding theoretical framework, the study demonstrated a case-centred research (Riessman 2010; Mishler 1997).

In analysing the stories from the older people of the four villages, I first re-translated the data collaboratively with my co-researcher after it was incorrectly translated by the independent translator. Then I organised the verbatim translated transcripts in village folders and read through each transcript in detail taking an iterative and reflexive process. This process meant going back and forth to the transcripts and the constructed stories as a way of getting a deeper understanding of the data. This process allowed me to understand what each village story was telling me and to be reflexive bearing in mind the intent behind the methodological frameworks I had chosen as best suited for this study. Interpretation was collectively done with the co-researcher and participants through deliberations during member-checking. I also cross-case analysed the stories for the purpose of developing a narrative that introduces all the participants in response to the question: Who are the AmaBomvane? Five narratives thus emerged from this process. I also drew data from my reflections informed by observations and photographs taken of the context. Polkinghorne's (1995) tenets of plotting a story were drawn to produce a coherent whole storyline that glues the events together. To ensure that the stories constructed responded to what the study wanted to know about the knowledges of AmaBomvane, I also used the study objectives. These were informed by the theoretical proposition (which is IKS and aspects of decoloniality for this study) as an analytic strategy for selecting the units of analysis for this study (Yin 2009). Such aligning to theoretical propositions also included enabling interpretation that is from experience. The same process of analysis was followed for the stories of youth whose main purpose was to supplement the data from their custodians. From this process, a sixth narrative emerged.

For data from the teachers and principals across the schools, I conducted thematic analysis. Methodologically, I used thematic analysis for the interviews following Braun and Clarke (2006) guiding work on thematic analysis. Each transcript was read one after the other several times in order to become intimately engaged with the data (Marshall & Rossman 2011). Then the transcripts were placed next to each other to identify codes, categories and themes that cut across all transcripts (as illustrated in the table below). This familiarity with

the transcripts helped in the process of identifying and selecting relevant data that spoke to the aims and questions of the study.

*Table 2: Phases of thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke 2006:87*

<b>PHASES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS</b>
<b>1. FAMILIARISING YOURSELF WITH YOUR DATA</b>	1. Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
<b>2. GENERATING INITIAL CODES</b>	2. Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
<b>3. SEARCHING FOR THEMES</b>	3. Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
<b>4. REVIEWING THEMES</b>	4. Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
<b>5. DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES</b>	5. Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
<b>6. PRODUCING THE REPORT</b>	6. Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts,

relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.
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When I completed all the above steps for the different groups, I did a case synthesis to bind the case whereby I analysed across the subunits of analysis within this single case to assist with drawing out themes for discussion. This second level of analysis is called analysis of narratives. The differences between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives are drawn out by Polkinghorne (1995) who states that narrative analysis produces stories and analysis of narratives draws out themes and relationships between the themes from the stories. I embedded this level of analysis in the discussion of findings as part of answering the key research questions of the study.

### **10. Trustworthiness of the study**

Trustworthiness is the key principle commonly used to assess good qualitative research using credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as criteria (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, Morrow's (2005) critique is that this long tradition of using this parallel to positivist criteria in other paradigms has been widely criticised for creating logical inconsistencies. She thus recommends a move away from these standards to more intrinsic standards that emerge directly from qualitative endeavours as aligned to the paradigm chosen for a study. This would serve as a way of rejecting the attitudes that other paradigms are not rigorous enough. Following this line of thought, I used social validity, subjectivity and reflexivity in qualitative research, adequacy of data and adequacy of interpretation as criteria for trustworthiness in this study (Morrow 2005).

Further aligning with the Indigenous paradigm, the four Indigenous principles (Chilisa 2012) were applied accordingly as a way of enhancing trustworthiness. These principles ensured a balanced visibility of participants' views, context, perspectives and voices in the research texts. For instance, relational accountability ensured interlinking of the various research process aspects while I too remained accountable to all links further increasing trustworthiness of the study.

Context as a collective relationship provided contextual triangulation of the findings (Chilisa 2012). Other forms used in the study included triangulation of translation (participants as

collaborators, translators, co-researcher and I), investigators (the research assistant and I) and data sources (capturing and respecting multiple perspectives) across the different villages with different groups of participants contributed to social validity (Chilisa 2012; Morrow 2005).

Peer debriefing with a peer and co-researcher took place at the end of every week of data collection and during writing-up stages. Drawing from the journal entries and touching base with the co-researcher during writing-up stages ensured adequacy of interpretation as well as monitored self-bias. Prolonged and varied field visits strengthened understandings of context from the participants' perspective thus building up adequate interpretation (Morrow 2005). A balance was reached in presentation of findings by writing narratives in the voice of participants and using italics to emphasise direct words not translated. I did this to showcase that the interpretations of the researcher are grounded in the lived experiences of the participants (Morrow 2012).

The use of various methods to triangulate data, and a detailed description of the research process and methods including the design, the steps taken, how data was gathered as well as the evaluation of the procedures to demonstrate consistency of findings – all established relational accountability of this study (Chilisa 2012).

I acknowledged that all research is subject to bias hence I positioned myself from the beginning. Reflexivity assisted me with this self-awareness process and unearthing of previous assumptions. I analysed my own preconceptions and beliefs in relation to the study by keeping a diary during the data collection and analysis process. This also served as a process of monitoring self, ensuring rights and responsibilities while also remaining accountable at every step and to all involved (Chilisa 2012).

Embedded in subjectivity notions is the concept of representation (Morrow 2005). I ensured respectful representation through contextual triangulation which ensured thick description (Chilisa 2012). My prolonged stay and involvement in some key activities of the village life, observations and reflexivity enabled me to gain and therefore provide a dense description of context from the positionality of being an insider. While the focus of this study was on one rural area in South Africa, it could be suggested that some of the findings that are revealed here will be relevant and can be applied to other communities of South Africa and Africa whose knowledges have been excluded and marginalised. Common contextual Indigenous

factors will increase the likelihood of people sharing the same experiences across different settings.

Furthermore, member-checking was done after transcribing and analysing by sharing the knowledge gained with the research participants to check that both data and interpretation of their narratives were well represented. Member-checking is a technique used by qualitative researchers to ensure that the data they have collected, and have interpreted, provides as close as possible an account of the participants' experience (Carlson 2010). Additional information was gained, and correction of errors took place during this process which ensured both credibility and respectful representation. I ensured respectful representation by listening, acknowledging, and ensuring that the voices and knowledges of my participants were well represented (Chilisa 2012). In this way, member-checking strengthened the credibility of findings. The stories were read back to participants providing them with the opportunity to determine whether the meaning generated was representative of their experience or not, making corrections where necessary. This process on its own was approached as a knowledge sharing process. This is like reciprocal appropriation as suggested by Chilisa (2012) where an iterative process is created through sharing data back with the participants for further comments and analysis.

Data was gathered until data adequacy (Morrow 2005) was reached. The richness of the narratives provided in-depth explanations of the case. The use of purposive sampling for villages and participants further strengthened the richness of the case.

These principles also ensured an ethical framework of the study that was built on a deep respect for the beliefs and practices of AmaBomvane.

## **11. Ethical considerations**

The four Rs discussed above also contribute to the ethics discussion. Indigenous research supports the view that the community should be actively involved in the research process. From community entry, the community was involved in both planning and conducting the study. As part of including the community as part of the research team, I worked closely with a community member fulfilling the role of a research assistant. Firstly, permission was obtained from the village's power structures (chiefs). Secondly, ethics approval was sought from Stellenbosch University.

The majority of older people in the area could not read for various reasons. Some had no formal education while others had lower levels of formal education. Most importantly, there were older people whose sight was failing them to be able to read what is on paper.

Therefore, a consent form was verbally explained to most participants using isiXhosa. The consent form explanation covered aspects such as: the aim of the research; the research process, the role of each participant and benefits to participating in the study; permission needed to write down and tape record the discussions; the principles of anonymity, privacy and confidentiality by protecting individual names; their right to withdraw from the research process at any time; a feedback of findings workshop and that they will be acknowledged all the time for their contribution (See appendix 6 for an example of an information leaflet and consent form that was used with minor adjustments made to suit each group of participants).

For those who could read, they had a choice of choosing between the English and isiXhosa versions of the information and consent form. Additionally, I discussed the information consent with the participants to ensure that everyone understood. Participants were given opportunities to ask questions and get clarity. Two copies (one copy for my documentation and the other for the participants to keep) were provided for each participant for signing. A separate consent form was prepared for parents of youth under the age of eighteen to provide consent together with (or on behalf of) the child.

Access to study site and participants was further sought through the community paramount chief and chiefs through a process of community entry where I presented the proposal and timeframes for entering the site. Key informants were identified, and contact details taken in order to phone and confirm dates for visiting the site. Community entry was used to build relationships with participants through shadowing and spending time with villagers and leaders to better understand the community. Being able to speak the language was an asset to informally converse with the participants to build relationships outside and prior to the data collection process - even on issues unrelated to the research. This process also allowed me to engage the community on the research process in terms of how it could be better positioned and aligned to their community needs.

For the purposes of this study, I am not regarding the human subjective experience as separate from the knowledges and knowledge production but seeing the human experience as a part of the process of producing community knowledge with participants of the study being researchers on their own regard. Kunene (1992) in his writing about African literature, speaks

to the problematic nature and issue of commodification of knowledge because it gives people a sense that they cannot contribute to broader discussion on knowledge production and use their own knowledge to solve their problems. Indigenous people assert that their identities are embedded in their knowledges. Given this stance, the study did not aim to remove identities of participants. I explained clearly on the information sheets that the participants may easily be identifiable due to naming their villages and organisations especially with the TVET which is known to be the only college in the area. As such, all participants consented from the position of being fully aware and informed of this issue. Pseudonyms were given to those who did not want their real identification while real names were kept for those who wanted to be identified. Drawing on Freire's (2002) work on the pedagogy of the oppressed, this study took the view that dissociating people's identities from their knowledge further contributes to the exploitation and further marginalisation of IKs. Hence participants were given a choice as to whether they want their identities to be hidden or not especially as there is no harm associated with the study. Also, failure to note Indigenous identities is not a neutral or egalitarian stance but a way in which the structural disadvantages as legacy of the past violence and neglect are maintained (Kirmayer & Brass 2016). This could be why data of Indigenous people's health is also scarce, thus hiding the inequities existing. The issue questions how anonymity issues are currently handled by the ethics boards.

Transparency was achieved through explaining the purpose of this study until participants were clear about what is expected of them. In the case of group sessions, I went through the importance of confidentiality with the participants. Methodologically, this study used the methodology of group discussions as it is within their collective ways and methods of doing. The familiarity of this method was a safe space for participants to willingly and freely participate in group conversations. Given the Indigenous qualitative paradigmatic nature of the study, the data collection spaces were seen as transformative as they served as knowledge sharing spaces with both the researcher and participants co-constructing knowledge.

Beneficence concerns "the provision of benefits and balancing those benefits against the risks of participation" (Fontes 2004:163) Non-maleficence refers to our duty as researchers to do no harm (Yick 2007). It was my responsibility to take special care not to stigmatise participants further and to ensure their safety. This was done by conducting talking circles in conducive environments, such as their homes. I constantly had to account to the participants



and answer any questions arising. Given that this is a minimal risk study, there was no discomfort anticipated. In addition to going through ethics approval from both the University and the Provincial Department of Education in Eastern Cape, the concept of Ubuntu which is embedded within the IKS stance allowed me to see myself as the reflection of the participants and therefore respect and honour the participants as I would wish for myself. Participating in some of the activities of the village promoted a sense of belongingness to the study site. These spoke to the respectful representation and reciprocal accountability principles. The research allowed for reciprocal appropriation in that benefits accrued to both communities and the researcher. I further ensured respectful representation by listening, paying attention and creating spaces for the voices and knowledges of my participants (Chilisa 2012) throughout the research process. This was to ensure that the research process did not further reproduce the same marginalisation of IKs. In this regard, the principle of justice was addressed. Justice calls for the fair treatment of research participants, free from discrimination, as well as fairness in distribution of benefits and burdens of the research (Yick 2007).

## Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by giving my own reflections on the reflexive methodological journey I went through.

From the beginning till completion of this study, I was reminded of how I am also a participant in many ways. This reminder took me back to the saying '*I am because we are*' as a point of reference thus not entirely separating myself from the participants. In this way, I was able to disrupt the dominant deficit thinking and promote respectful ways of doing research thus allowing me to see myself in the researched. I was reminded of the multiple identities I carry which position me as privileged and oppressed simultaneously. I may have been privileged to conduct this study as a researcher who is also from the same province and understanding the language. But I was also occupying marginalised positions as a woman, an Indigenous person like my participants, being the colonised too. I am a Black person researching a field that is also marginalised, being the one classified as rural, 'primitive and backward' and as having a 'strong rural background' in my English accent.

I was also reminded of the somewhat different space I occupied with different responsibilities and managing these relationship responsibilities as a researcher. Though I knew the language

and we shared similar experiences, by virtue of being a researcher I was positioned in relation to the community in a complicated way with responsibilities like ethics and managing relationships (Smith 1999; Chilisa 2012). However, there was the element of seeing myself through them and they seeing themselves through me. These are the various spaces I was grappling with. As Chilisa (2012) affirms, this point of reference is a significant African contribution to critical reflexivity. It is a way of knowing when knowledge production includes both the researched and the researcher's journeys into each other's lives (Laible 2000 cited in Chilisa 2012). I thus argue that prolonged immersion of self in the context is critical for both indigenous and non-indigenous researchers to understand different features of indigenous research (the people, place and expectations) as well as unpack how these relations will be maintained throughout the research process. These steps lay important foundation for correct interpretation of findings with the goal of ensuring a true reflection of the realities which is integral to respectful representation.

In addition, I was grappling with the history of research thus constantly having to ask myself many questions as guided by the responsibilities of a transformative healer (Chilisa 2012). These questions related to being Black, conscious and ensuring research that is both ethical and respectful as adopted from Chilisa's (2012) work: whose side am I on?; Am I challenging and resisting dominant discourses that constantly marginalise my people (Indigenous people) and how?; Who am I writing about (self or others or both)?; What narrative needs to be rewritten?; Do the researched own a description of themselves?; Have I captured the voices of the researched in a way that they can recognise and know themselves and would like others to know them?; What humiliation have theories and bodies of knowledge caused to Indigenous people?; What body of IK can I use to counter such harmful theories?; How are Indigenous people portrayed in literature?; Is there any deficit thinking or theorising? (Chilisa 2012).

These were certainly important but not easy questions. However, they assisted me in ensuring a negotiated, culturally responsive and place-based methodology for AmaBomvane. The questions further made me reflect about the role of imperialism, colonisation and globalisation in the construction of knowledge thus enabling me to reject academic and methodological imperialism<sup>14</sup> (Chilisa 2012) through being guided by the four Rs as

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<sup>14</sup> According to Chilisa (2012: 117) academic imperialism refers to a "tendency to denigrate, dismiss and attempt to quash alternative theories, perspectives and methodologies" while Methodological Imperialism refers to "a tendency to build a collection of methods, techniques and rules that valorize the dominant culture".

principles. These questions will certainly help all researchers (indigenous and non-indigenous) to be clear about the intentions behind research as well as the stance that is being taken regarding the political, academic and methodological imperialism.

Further questions could also assist researchers in ensuring true collaboration and participation of the community and participants. This is an important step of ensuring rigor in indigenous research. These questions include: whose research is it?; who will benefit?; who will formulate the questions? Who will decide on methodology, analysis and writing up of the findings?. These questions are grounded in not only the need for culturally safe practices but also a need to confront the power imbalances because research is never neutral. I argue that no researcher should work without a co-researcher who will serve a cultural consultant and a mentor to researchers.

## **Chapter 6: A case of narratives: Village stories about formal schooling for health**

*“Research exists within a system of power. What this means for Indigenous researchers as well as Indigenous activists and their communities is that Indigenous work has to ‘talk back to’ or ‘talk up to’ power. There are no neutral spaces for the kind of work required to ensure that traditional Indigenous knowledge flourishes; that it remains connected intimately to Indigenous people as a way of thinking, knowing and being; that is sustained and actually grows over future generations....Getting the story right, Telling the story well are tasks that Indigenous activists and researchers must both perform” (Smith, 2012:226)*

## Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the stories that arose from the first level of analysis - that is, narrative analysis which involves the collection of participants' stories as data (Polkinghorne 1995). In this level of analysis, participants were grouped per village and from these groups, a story was constructed for each village weaving in data from observations, journaling and field notes from context. Further analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was done. Thematic analysis was mainly used with data from youth and teachers to guide the development of their stories. The following narratives are co-constructed stories of participants as embedded within the four sampled clusters of villages – Nkanya, Gusi (loosely named as Madwaleni), Hobeni and Xhora (Xhora). As Russell Bishop (cited in Smith 2012) suggests, I used story telling as a research tool, to represent the truth of AmaBomvane culturally and appropriately and positioning AmaBomvane as retainers of control in the storytelling process.

As a vantage point, the stories below begin with introducing who the AmaBomvane are and their stories which interchangeably move from past, present and future, highlighting key events relating to how they imagine themselves and their current health status. The methodology of storytelling and talking circles created a contextually appropriate space for participants to organically construct knowledge as a collective. This aligns with their processes and an African worldsense<sup>15</sup> which perceives knowledge as co-created in a social context. Following this, I give narratives of key older people per cluster of village. It is important to note that, in telling the story, I allowed the narratives to take the shape and form they were presented in by the participants – thus there will be a difference in presentation. I then present a narrative emanating from talking circles with young people across the villages. Lastly, a narrative of teachers across the different schools and the TVET college of Xhora is presented.

In keeping with my integrative methodology, I tried as far as possible to maintain people's voices and use quotations where appropriate in the narratives. In this context, I demonstrate that the strict boundary in keeping my view and those of co-researchers is always broken to an extent. I am also deliberately mixing the conventional and non-conventional ways of

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<sup>15</sup> I use the term worldsense instead of worldview following Oyewumi's (1997) assertions that worldsense better aligns with an African way of knowing that is not only limited to logic/rationality. Unlike the European context, African cultures also include knowing through other senses. In decoloniality thought, this means knowing through both the body and mind.

reporting while also staying very close to co-researchers' own voices. This will be seen in the different presentations below.

\*Do note that the following older AmaBomvane narratives are written in a structure that stays very close to their voices, with quotation marks used for direct words while the existence of both quotation marks and italics in words denotes direct words with emphasis of the participants.

### **Introducing AmaBomvane - “*UbuBomvane Siyabuphila*”**

To say ‘*I am a Bomvane*’ - *speaks to our tribe as part of the Black race*. It speaks to *who we are as beings of this area*. Though we are situated in the locality of the Xhosas, here, *we are the Bomvane tribe*. This says, *we are Bomvu's children, our great grandparent*. Since his (Bomvu's) departure from the Ngwana land, where we hear that we were coming from, he came to this area which is between Mbashe and Umtata. Bomvu occupied land from lower Mqanduli next to Coffee Bay area all the way along the west coast right to where we are here in Xhora. Beyond this area, it is Gcaleka's land all the way to Idutywa across the river as you can see that these areas are mostly divided according to clans and chieftaincy is guided by this too. It was following the times of war where the children of Bomvu and maTshezi were defeated and then removed from the land of Ngwana. This Bomvanaland was found by Gambushe (the grandchild of Bomvu) whom after intense fighting with the king of Mpondoland, left and found this area unoccupied and forest-like. He approached the then king of AmaXhosa known as ‘*Hintsa*’ to request this vacant land while also expressing how he had a miserable stay and lived unhappily in the land of Faku in Mpondoland as reasons for coming to the Xhosa land.

The genesis of the war (which we are aware of) comes from when Gambushe was holding an acting position for his nephew, ‘*Mbili*’ (his brother's child). When the nephew grew up, he had to be afforded ownership and leadership of the land as his father had passed on.

However, the Faku Nation opposed the matter and rather wanted Gambushe to be the one owning the land. Conflict began with saying from Mbili that Gambuse is refusing with his land and sovereignty. This was untrue as it was the people who did not want the stepping down of Gambushe, claimed Gambushe. Attacks on Gambushe began and it was then that he had to fight the kingship of Amampondo until he defeated King Ngqungqushe. Hintsa agreed to hand over the land with a condition that he must give ten cows for it (a process called *ukubusa*). As such, Gambushe got the land like that and named it after his great grandfather

(*ukhokho*) - ‘uBomvu’. It was then that this area was named *kwaBomvane* and all children birthed in this lineage became AmaBomvane.

We hear that uBomvu (*ukhokho wethu*) was also caught up and involved in other wars as he left the Ngwana land, wars which we know little of their origins. He then died when he got to Mount Aylif and that is where he was laid to rest, near a place called Ntabentsizwa.

Gambushe birthed only sons whom I would say each were a few years apart and from Gambushe, I would say there are, till to date, ten generations in this land from Bomvu.

*Gambushe* gave birth to *Ntshunqe*, *Ntshunqe* gave birth to *Moni*, *Moni* gave birth to *Langa*, *Langa* gave birth to *Ngonyama*, *Ngonyama* gave birth to *Gwebindlala*, *Gwebindlala* gave birth to *Ngubezulu*, *Ngubezulu* gave birth to *Zwelenqaba*, *Zwelenqaba* gave birth to *Thandabantu* who is now known as *Ntabozuko*. That is where the Gambushe generation ends for now.

Upon learning that he has received the land, Gambushe invited his brothers from the Mpondoland to come with him. Following their arrival, his younger brother was called back in Mpondoland. He was called while in the river, disappeared there and was known to be lost for about a year in Bomvana. Indigenously, *we have water people* (sinabantu bamanzi okanye basemlanjeni) – a place where we take all quarrels of the Tshezi’s in Mpondoland. When the ‘lost younger brother’ came back, he was leading two cows – which he was instructed to pass on to his brother, Gambushe – by the water people. The purpose of the cows (commonly known as iinkomo zamanzi / zomlambo), as instructed, was for use during difficult times in the community such as *xana libharhile naxa kubalele kuneminyiki emboneni emasimini* (when faced with drought affecting crops).

Amabomvane have a belief and/or a tradition that when they are experiencing things like drought in the area and other problems – they would go to the great palace and one of these cows would be slaughtered. For example, if it was dry for a long time, after the ceremony – it would rain, and people’s ploughed gardens and farms would be cultivated, preparing for food production. Another traditional example is that when the crop (mainly maize) on the farms was filled with worms – a process called *Inqolopho* would take place where young girls would wear “*inkciyo*” and be sent to the farms to primarily sing (this is known as *ukombela*) – with or without some dance involved, typically in a traditional ceremony). This was a serious process and those who would make a joke out of it would be charged and required to pay in the form of producing a cow to the kingship palace.



After this *Inqolopho* process, the worms would disappear on the maize and one cob of maize from each farm would be taken to the great homestead as a way of finalising the process. The slaughtered cow was not to be eaten by women at all (except for girls who had not entered the womanhood stage) and was not to be taken into the house. It was slaughtered and eaten until it gets finished in the kraal area. It would rain following that ceremony and people would farm and produce big amounts of maize. You would find wealth in those times because of rituals like that – rituals with a purpose of ensuring food security and prevent hunger in our land. Having livestock and land that produces enough food was and is wealth to us. Men would eat the meat and sleep over in the kraal and wake up the next day to finish the meat – following which they would all go to the river to bath and then head to their respective households. Those were the traditional ways of AmaBomvane and that is how problems and conflicts were resolved to maintain peace and live in harmony in our communities.

Our people have always had their own ways as guided by tradition though on a larger scale we are loosely and commonly classified under AmaXhosa. But, *AsingomaXhosa thina* (We are not Xhosas). You will just find that we actually borrow a lot of our ways from isiXhosa. We live here as AmaBomvane with beliefs varying uniquely according to various clans. We are people of traditions and rituals. This is to say – *simisa into ngokuthetha singabantu bakudala* (as ancient people, we make things happen through talking). We are a people whose majority has really resisted formal education. Our Indigenous ways included gatherings, talking, and working together to reach rules and conclusions about things that could build our nation as well as learning from each other's traditional teachings. Nowadays, in this time of money, there is nothing you can start if you do not have money. Our children then do not want to follow our Indigenous ways because they are busy chasing this money. Money which was prophesied by Ntsikane - saying if we take the money route, our nations would fall apart. Indeed, it happened, we have fallen apart and are continuing to fall apart.

For instance, anciently, we did not have seasons of initiation of boys to manhood because we were not so much pressured by jobs and working. This is to say, we were not under threat from various factors controlling how we live. Boys began their rite of passage from around the months of March all the way to June and July or August of maximum stay. The initiation for boys was also longer. However, with the introduction of formal schooling which interfered deeply with African traditional ways due to religion by Christians disguised as helping Africans to see light, progress and be civilised. As such, many processes were

interrupted to an extent that we value less and hardly have time for *izithethe* (traditions). This came with Western culture which made us think we were in the dark and now we will see the light through formal schooling with its Western culture. This is how the missionaries interpreted it for us but when you look carefully this light was limiting and an illusion to us because we did not see the darker sides of all these things then. Their removing us from darkness meant disintegrating us from our culture. We used to wear African attires such as animal skin and staying in households built by our own hands, using stones to light fire and for writing, using *iintoli* (bows and arrows) to hunt for meat but colonisers introduced and wanted to change us to using guns rather, they introduced knives, replacing stones we used to light fire with matches. All this led to people being introduced to churches and Christianity.

*UbuBomvane siyabuphila* (we live being a Bomvane). When we speak about *impilo* (health) - we speak about our way of life, we speak about living well and happily with plentiful food. This is to say, we are well and eating well depending on what we perceive as good nutritious food for us. This is a way for us to say we are not experiencing any hunger but that everyone especially children and pregnant women are well fed until they reach satiety. It means we can perform our traditions and rituals accordingly. Additionally, this is to say there is no existence of sickness in our bodies with all generations participating in key activities of the village according to age, stage, and gender. That is what health speaks to, for us as AmaBomvane. Our being together with our ways of living which assist us to maintain this health is our health. Our ways are always about maintaining health and harmony here.

### **The Gusi (Madwaleni) Village older people's narrative**

This cluster of villages is right at the centre of the study setting surrounding the Madwaleni Hospital which is the only secondary hospital in the setting. The participants here consisted of older people as well as the middle generation (daughters-in-law).

Generally, children learn at home. At home too, there is education with children being educated about all crucial knowledges of the home. All learning starts at home and is continuous and lifelong. Having lived here, we grew up as children being brought up and taught about the importance of cleanliness, the importance of eating – the emphasis being on eating well-balanced nutritious food. You will find out then that, if people eat in the same manner we were socialised into as we were growing – AmaBomvane eat well-balanced healthy food that is nutritious with all the necessary vitamins and proteins as aligned to the ways of Bomvanaland. You have probably already noticed that we live on maize here as the key source of our foods and that is what we mainly plant. We make a lot of foods out of maize here. From *ukuguba umbona etyeni* (hand-grinding maize on a stone block as depicted in figure 6 below) to make mealie meal to *ukungqutsha esingqutshweni* (a traditional maize milling process of crushing or stamping or chopping dried corn kernels as shown in figure 7 below) to make samp.



*Figure 6: Isigubo (maize grinding stone to make mealie meal)*



*Figure 7: Isingqutsho (maize milling rock to make samp)*

As a result, if we knew you were coming, we would have ground and stamped some maize so that you can see it clearly and differentiate it from the one we buy from the shops. Just like our mealie meal, there is a huge difference from the one sold at the shops. A lot of nutritious elements have been sifted from the products we get at the shops, but we have from our foods through using our hands.

As our IKs get undermined and undervalued, some of these key knowledges and lessons about food are being lost and washed away resulting in needing to re-teach Indigenous people about how to eat and which food is nutritious. Reasons here include having to let go of our Indigenousness and its knowledges because of modernity and civilization - we thought that, the things brought to us by the Western people were all civilised, good and healthy for us. We never knew how to sift and separate what is good or not for us to not take everything. For example, we did not know things like rice, we merely thought that it is the civilised thing to eat and we did not know how to mix these new foods to make a balanced meal like the simple nutritious foods we made and ate with our hands. We did not even know how these modern foods were made. It became so bad to a point where we ended up eating rice alone without even adding anything to it like vegetables. We saw them as better and it was imposed as such

on us. It is not that we were not able to use our minds, ‘*besimnandelwe bubomi be mpucuko, ubomi bamagqobhoka*’ (we were so enchanted by modernised ways of living, ways of the converted) to an extent that we were socialised to think that everything from the West, everything modern was good while ours was bad. We were conditioned to think like that. We were told to let go of our ways as they are not taking us anywhere in life. *Ubomi bempucuko, bobugqobhoka* (Modernity) promised us a good life, a happier life. All we saw was that these modern meals made a complete meal. So a lot of the things we eat, we eat because we have seen white people eating them and other people from overseas then we get to think they are civilised. We then held on to them though we didn’t quite do them the same way they do while throwing away all that was ours.

As we said, it is not that we were not eating well nor that we lacked because we were planting *imifino* (leafy green vegetables like cabbage, spinach), *ibhatata* (sweet potato), *ithanga* (pumpkin), peppers and many more. That is why I am saying, if I had known about your visit early, I would have prepared all these things to show you. We fell for the false hope of *ubomi banamhlanje bempucuko, nobugqobhoka* (today’s modernised, civilised world). Today, we have what we never had before – we have high blood pressure, obesity and all these illnesses of lifestyle (*izifo zokuphila*). We used to merely see and witness these illnesses from Amagqobhoka<sup>16</sup>, the people beyond the Mbhashe river. We, on the other hand, were still living our ways from the morning we would wake up make and eat *isidudu* (porridge) made from the maize we ground into mealie meal with our own hands – we initially never used to buy mealie meal from the shops as we could make our own. *Irhewu* (fermented drinking porridge) would be made by us. We used maize for everything. We grew our own chickens and cattle and we would slaughter and eat from our own animals, not the one kept on ice at the shops. Now we have high blood pressure, ulcers, painful knees, and legs to count just a few. No one here wants to hold on to those ways now, even though we know them, our children do not want to learn from us. They are not interested in *imveli* (indigeneity). In short, these teachings are not welcomed by our children.

This is to say, there is no middle point of interaction between these knowledges (school and home knowledges and teachings). The way of cleaning at school is not the same as how we clean at home. At home, *uyatshayela* (you sweep) and then *usinde ngobulongwe* (plastering

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<sup>16</sup> A term that took root with the gradual conversion of Blacks to Christianity and Western formal education. The religious converts were called (Amagqobhoka) as they started to despise their African values, traditions and norms.



on the floor using cow dung as depicted in figure 8 below) using your hands while kneeling down – that is how you clean.



*Figure 8: Cleaning or plastering the floor with cow dung*

You learn this from home. You learn the use of your hands. There is no mop and carpet here apart from mostly the houses of Amagqobhoka – these things need to be bought with money. We make *amakhuko* (weaved mats) with our hands, you cultivate with your hands and grind maize. You do not learn by writing it as in school, you learn through doing here at home. Would these ways of learning come together then?

We grew up being taught by our parents. Young men would be taught activities done outside of the house such as *ukolusa impahla* (herding cattle) in the fields, *uyoziseza* (to take cattle to the river to drink) and you will teach the young ones coming after you to do the same. The young men were involved in teachings and doing of tasks in and around the kraal learning, in addition to *ukolusa* (herding), *ukugawula uthango lobuhlanti ngezembe* (to cut hedgerows for the kraal fence using an axe), *ukubiyela* (fencing), *ukwenza idyokhwe kubotshwe iinkabi kuyolinywa* (to make yoke, fasten and attached it to two animals to be used mostly in big fields for ploughing) the whole of the summer season. The older people would then take over once the planting has been done *bahlakule* (the process of hoeing and weeding usually done after ploughing) and *bavune* (harvest) and store - with the young ones assisting purposefully to learn the tasks.

Young girls were taught activities within the home like cleaning the homestead, hand-grinding, stamping, plastering the house walls with mud (*ukutyabeka*), *ukusinda* (plastering with cow dung on the floor). They too assisted elders with harvesting and pruning. Following harvest time, *kuyachutywa okanye kubhulwe* (peeling corn off the corn cob or mowing it to prepare it for making different foods like mealie meal or samp or soup or making traditional beer using the black cast iron pots, see figure 9 below).



*Figure 9: Peeling corn off the cob*

Young girls also mastered the art of *ukutheza* (fetching firewood, see figure 10 below) after the boys have cut the hedges in the forest. This is used to make fire for cooking and warming water among other things. The new brides also participated in this task a lot. This collected firewood is usually organised at home near the fire place outside. This organised firewood is called *Igoqo* (a pile of firewood as depicted in figure 11 below). *Igoqo* must always be kept levelled up so that the household does not run out of firewood at any point in time.



*Figure 10: Ukutheza (Fetching firewood)*





*Figure 11: Igoqo (pile of firewood)*

All this learning continues until children enter the coming of age stage. Boys become men - through the process of *ukuya ethontweni ukuyokoluka* (initiation school for manhood) and girls become women – through the process of *ukuya emkhusaneni ayothonjiswa* (initiation school for womanhood). *Emkhusaneni* is a sacred living place where these young girls are kept indoors for the duration of the initiation process. *Ithonto* (See figure 12 below) is a sacred living place for boys during their initiation process. These are rituals and traditions of grooming children here in Bomvanaland and to celebrate such processes. A cow is slaughtered upon completion of the school known as ‘coming out’ (*ukukhutshwa kwamantombi emkhusaneni okanye abafana ethontweni*).



*Figure 7: Ithonto or Ethontweni (Where boy initiates stay during initiation school period)*

We have always lived like this here with these children marrying and being married as they grow older to becoming men and women of the village. They learn respect as a key valued principle; they learn to value and work the land as a key living resource for health and well-being; they learn to build steady homesteads respecting one another. Men were taught that a

woman is a highly respected person in the village. They learnt that their land is their health and that the only way to live and prevent hunger is through working the land and ploughing. These children also taught their own children with the end goal being to sustain food production. These knowledges taught people how to have a good quality of life. They learnt collective action in order to live in plenitude.

All these things go hand-in-hand with our health because our daily activities help to keep our bodies physically active and functional while balancing the daily work with rest when you feel tired. We never used to cry about knees because we were active, fresh and strong. Additionally, living in abundance of food and working together kept everyone happy, healthy and at peace, respecting and being humble to one another reciprocally. Our bodies need to be physically active and our stomachs need different kinds of foods from rough to soft. Our food still contains vitamins and proteins. Health here is about ploughing so that there is no hunger and children can grow healthy and strong. It is about farming cattle, that is how we live. This is where our wealth lies. It is about working with your hands, working the land. Having peaceful, respectful, and disciplined children is how we should live. Our literacies entail this way of life, our history, rituals, and traditions. This knowledge should not be left behind.

It is hard now! In our view, three things have happened.

Firstly, '*isikolo sibathathile abantwana kuthi kengoku*' (formal schooling has now taken our children from us). The schooling system has been feeding onto this colonial indoctrination and assimilation approach where children undermine their own ways and take up alien Western ways. The genesis of the problem lies with the issue where those who are formally educated shy away and no longer want to be involved in our Indigenous ways. Ways of producing food here at home is through cultivating and harvesting to ensure food security. Now, once we send them to school, they no longer wish to participate much in these activities. To them, it feels like they are being oppressed. These activities are oppressive to them because they have rights. They will tell you upfront that there is already prepared samp at the shops. We blame schools because this behaviour is first seen from the formally educated ones. However, even the ones that have never been to school are now joining heavily. Children learn from one another all sorts of behaviours. It seems as though life is better when you are not participating in these village teachings and activities. So, everyone wants to live that fantasised better life and follows through in letting go. You learn how to work for your own self-reliance and they do not want this work as it is perceived as 'working

hard' and oppressive to them. At school, they do not learn about these things. Schooling does not refer to such a life and its activities.

The school undermines children and the knowledge and identity they bring with to the school, in turn, the children undermine their parents, a cycle of broken identities continues. These children refer to us (older people) as *Ibhari* (a slang associated with negative connotations referring to a person who is stupid) or *Iqaba* (a negative word used to refer to people who resisted Western formal education and Christianity).

Secondly, we took the money route which broke the harmonious relationship we have with nature thus destroying our lands. Our children who have gone to school are not interested in working the land, looking after nature, and using it as a resource for living. They are rather interested in making money and depending on this money to live. To have money, you must continue being a slave doing exploitative work in the way things are in this world or you must go to school and then leave your home to be employed by a master. Even those who are not formally educated rush for seeking jobs in order to make money. *Kutyiwa imali ngoku* (literally refers to we eat money now; figuratively refers to how one needs to have money in order to be able to put food on the table). This money has created an unequal social order. As a result, those with money are perceived as the better people, they attain a higher social status and it happens to be mostly the formally educated ones. From this life, they think they will attain a better quality of life. Slavery continues because of this status quo yet the better life never materialises. Our children are struggling. What we perceived, as the uneducated ones, to be a good life is seen as oppressive and backwards. What then happens? The one with money calls the shots. As parents, who are uneducated formally lose all the respect, no one listens to us. The one with money is the one perceived as the knower and only he or she can come with a better life.

Lastly, everyone is into alcohol. Boys and girls gather in huge numbers in those taverns day and night. Teachers drink with these learners in the taverns. How will they respect one another? They have become unruly. They hit us back when we discipline them and they claim that we abuse them. Now, government said we must not discipline. What does the saying '*charity begins at home*' then mean in such an era? What can we do to enforce discipline? We do not know what to do. Under the influence of alcohol, they attack us at night demanding money and at times rape us as older people threatening to kill us should we report and reveal their names. Even health professionals drink and smoke with these young

ones, do you think they will listen to them then when they one day go for a medical consultation? They will tell them, ‘but we do this together how can you say I must stop it?’ They say they have rights. They fight each other under this influence of alcohol, we are burying them in numbers because of alcohol fights. Men are not working, they misuse family money to buy alcohol. Newly wedded brides are heavily stressed in these homes by men. They depend on a pill to keep them sane. Meanwhile, the number of taverns is increasing with alcohol sold to young people. Owners of the taverns value making money over life of children and community. Here, we used to have only *Umqombothi* (brewed traditional beer as depicted in figure 12 below) and it never used to make people misbehave. This alcohol now is damaging the community.



*Figure 12: Making brewed traditional beer*

Our children have become corrupt, they have turned away! What can we exactly do to stop it?

It is even difficult to say what would change the status quo here because we cannot say they must stop schooling as that too has some benefits. It is important that they become formally educated and learning is continuous. We cannot say the solution to staying true to themselves and their ways is to remain what was called *Amaqaba* (Plural for Iqaba) because it is not easy now in this era, but we cannot say people are better now either. Those who have not been to school learn the behaviour of the formally educated and follow suit in letting go of the ways which would assist them in navigating life. Life seems easier and happier on the other side, but it remains a fantasy when one crosses over. The schooling life is promoting this as it is not relating to the way of life here. Education has not yet assisted our people to progress and improve their quality of life. It is rather destroying our children by not affording opportunities

to learn about their own knowledges but outside knowledges only. Our knowledges prepared children to sustain themselves, to be free, wealthy, and content. But people's land was forcefully dispossessed by foreign white invaders and converted us to mine labourers to make money for them while we were still left with no money returns but hunger and poverty. White people destroyed us by trying to make a living through us and our work. These are the fruits of the knowledges they came with.

We do not really know what they are learning at school apart from seeing when we pass that there is a healthy garden. Whether they learn about working the land remains an assumption to most of us. Even when you hear about their subjects, you think that they are supposed to be covering relevant strategies of living. If it was possible, children here should be taught by teachers who are from here, who understand the environment and way of life here. These teachers would better connect and understand the level of the children here and build on that. They would be able to better link using practical realistic examples from a life of a Bomvane. Now, these teachers ridicule children and they use this undermined learners' way of life to justify for poor performance in cases where children perform badly. How do you undermine eating vegetables from the garden? We have a very nutritious meal here where you mix green leaves like spinach with mealie meal to make a good balanced meal. The teachers undermine this meal instead of encouraging them. The learners take this and start hating their lives, slowly alienating themselves from this way of life and long for the city way of life advertised by the teacher. That is part of erasing what we instil in our children and children do not want to go against the teacher as they are labelled rebellious when they resist. They strip children's identities at a critical stage when they should be building children. Children are left feeling like they are not the same as other children, that there are better schools and better places. These teachers use the background of the learners whose parents have never been to school and whose households are still mainly *Ungquphantsi* (refers to rondavels) as a leverage to undermine and not respect parents and learners. The learners then also start undermining and disrespecting their parents thus not wanting to take any knowledge from the parents. Learners are currently not able to retain the ways of living of the home and its knowledges while also attending a school that aims to erase and invalidate the home.

It is important that they know about their local history, traditions, and rituals because unfortunately they will never find it in books as no one has written about it before. Now,

when they speak about these, they are asked where they are documented. They need to be taught at school because these undermined ways build and sustain a person. Learning then is meant to transform a person from one basic lower level to a higher level, it is to be about building on what people already have so that they can progress in life. *School knowledge has assisted people with independent individualistic living but our knowledges assist with general and collective health and well-being.*



## **The Nkanya Village older people's narrative**

Nkanya is located at the mouth of Xhora river along the seaside. Voices in this narrative included those from older people as well as the middle generation. The Nkanya people posited that, in Bomvanaland, knowledge begins and ends at home.

*Homes become the means and an end to learning.* When we speak about *Ulwazi lwemveli* (IK) here, ‘*we speak about the doing of Indigenous activities in an Indigenous way. This is to say, we plough in order to put food on the table, we farm animals and perform our traditions and rituals*’. Children grow up being taught and educated about these ways because they are important to the health and well-being of a Bomvane. These ways are important because they are our ways of living, our ways of maintaining health. You see, we are persons and we are knowers with or without formal schooling. If you do not have knowledge of your environment and your origins, you are not a person. Your origins and the environment make up a person. Without connecting with these, your identity and that of your children will always be affected negatively and stripped because you do not know yourself. It constrains your happiness as a person. That is why we believe here that knowledge and health go hand-in-hand. Knowledge is meant to service our lives as a people. That is why the homes as knowledge spaces where children learn, have this purpose of preparing children for living their lives through learning about their ways and practising them. This paves a way for your becoming in life. You must be able to be self-reliant with sufficient food. Children learn many things that service their lives here and all knowledge learnt must play a role in enhancing the quality of life of our communities. The knowledges speak to who we are as AmaBomvane and they speak to Ubuntu.

How we teach children and how children learn is informed by certain beliefs and principles, presented and expressed through idioms and proverbs, such as *Inyathi ibuzwa kwaba phambili* (meaning wisdom is learnt from the elders). *He who teaches, learns* – a proverb that places the responsibility on the learner to ensure that knowledge gained is passed on to others and used to further contribute to society because learning is not only individually focused for us. Knowing is also a construct of the collective. The older people teach by showing and those who learn (children), learn by doing. What is important for children at home is to assist with key activities such as, fetching water from the river. When a child comes back from school, they must assist the older people. We plough in the gardens and children need to assist us with this in order to learn. For example, we have *imisi* (river reed, see figure 13 below) here in our gardens which is often used for thatching (see figure 14 below) and to



weave mats and baskets. The grandmother leads and takes all grandchildren to go to the garden, each carrying their own sickle. The grandmother stands in the middle while the children are positioned on the sides, showing them how to cut the reed. It is the responsibility of the older person to facilitate learning of these skills in the home.



*Figure 13: Fetching river reed*



*Figure 14: Thatched roofing*

There were two ways of grooming children here and ensuring that they learn. There are teachings facilitated by a father and those facilitated by a mother. Some knowledge you take from a father and some from your mother. That is how we were brought up too. There are things that parents cannot do for children like *fetching water* (See figures 15 and 16 below).



*Figure 15: Fetching water from the river*



*Figure 16: Another transport form of collecting big loads of water from the river*

Girls and boys learn from a young age that they must fetch water from the river after school. They also learn that they need to herd cattle or goats until they reach stages of manhood and womanhood. Men are taught to never lay a hand on a woman. Should this happen, the man becomes embarrassed in the whole village known as a coward that beats women, women who are generally valued and highly respected beings among the AmaBomvane. He becomes a joke and has to learn a better way of relating to women. Such lessons teach men to step up their game as their image gets tarnished through ill-treating women.

There are a lot more other things that children learn then such as:

*Ukuhlonipha* (showing respect: all parents of the village are every child's parents) – respect is a concept that starts at home and *Ukuthobeka* (meaning being humble or having humility) is a key indicator of an Indigenously educated person. It cannot begin at school. Children learn this from home first. Let us take an example, a child cannot go and clean the front and back yard fields at school without learning to do it at home first. If I drink alcohol or I smoke at home and share these with my child, how would the school teach the child otherwise then

when the behaviour is taught at home? Everything starts with the relationships at home between children and older people. We even use specific terminologies as a sign of respect for terms that cannot be said publicly. Even newly wedded brides learn such values from the older person in the home. But, you do not just talk, you teach through practising what you preach. Children learn more from what you do than what you say. That is why participation is important here.

*Ukulima* (ploughing) – we are people who respect and value the role of home produced foods here because we live through ploughing for ourselves, let alone the Western foods like rice. This thing is new to us. Doing everything for ourselves and ploughing different foods like vegetables, other people even plant fruit trees. All this is important to us. We live and sustain ourselves through farming. We have grown up now through this way of life. Nowadays, there is poverty because our children have let go of ploughing. They depend on buying food. We, on the other hand, never even bought sour milk, we milked this from the cows. Our children's cattle are money now. Their houses do not even have kraals. Most of us do not have formal education but during our times, there were gardens even at school where children were taught about gardening and were involved practically. So, the learning of this important way of life was taught both in school and at home. In most schools, this is not happening. Schools hire people to work the garden rather. This is a very important subject which should be introduced from Grade R. we need a book really that will document these important lessons and be used at school as a way of making education speak to the reality of children and their way of life.

Ukolusa (herding) for boys and *ukutheza* (fetching firewood as depicted in pictures above) and water for girls. Children are introduced in different stages aligned to their age and stage. For instance, boys are first introduced to herding goats and sheep, as they grow up, they are upgraded and introduced to herding cows. All this time they learn the value of a kraal, that a young man needs to learn to build a kraal. From there, he learns how to work the garden, cut long blocks of wood hedges and fence the garden with it to protect plants from animals and then plough once it is fenced and homes cannot starve. The hedges are also used to build storage boxes for mielies and pumpkin (See figure 17 below). These are the knowledges we pass to our children. Girls are upgraded to first making fire outside and cooking using the black cast iron pots (See figure 18 below). We do not have gas and stoves.





*Figure 16: Food storage boxes*



*Figure 18: Cooking outside*

Ukwakha umzi (building a home) - men are taught how to respect their households, how to relate with their wives and children, how to build this home and how to relate with extended family and relatives. These lessons keep the spirit of Ubuntu among us. They teach children about building relationships linking to the notion of reciprocal humility. Even when someone has made you angry or you are upset about what happened to you, it is always recommended that you take a walk and come back feeling calm. For instance, children would be told to go

fetch water from the river, when they come back, they would have let go of everything that was causing tension. Boys would go herding. These activities have a healing element. They are helpful in avoiding any verbal and physical fights between people. People here learnt to even build their own home from making bricks to erecting the house. The making of bricks is called “*ukutena*” (See figures 19 and 20 below). We work together to make these. When they are ready, those who can build start building. Some fetch wood (*iziqonga*) from the forest and these are used for roofing (as depicted in figure 14 above) while others cut river reed for thatching.



*Figure 19: Brick making*



*Figure 20: Building a rondavel using self-made bricks*

We also have herbs here which we are close to completely losing them because we would rather go to the clinic for a panado (a pain tablet) instead of using our own. We have herbs for headaches which you smear on your head and it helps. We have *ukrakrayo* (a herb that was used for deworming when children have lost appetite and show signs of worms). Some

of these things we have stopped using and we rather rush to the clinic. I sometimes ask at the clinic, what is it that is making us get diabetes and high blood pressure when there are people older than us here who do not have these conditions and these conditions never existed here before. It is the food we eat nowadays. We sometimes make examples about us who are classified as poor people here because we do not eat much of these meat from the shops, we do not even like things like rice. We do not have a lot of sicknesses because we eat our vegetables from the garden. This is to say we must return to our ways of living and produce our own food in our land.

Most of our activities, as you see, connect us with nature. Our own livelihoods are serviced and sustained by nature. We live through nature. Nature sustains us. Our knowledges focus on preparing people against dependency but for self-reliance and interdependence. It is always safe to use your home knowledge to sustain yourself. White people used to use us here and make us work for them using our knowledge to enrich themselves only. We need to use our knowledge for ourselves. You see now, we get arrested when we go by the sea, they are taking the sea away from us. They fish there and sell to make money. When we are seen there as Black people, we get arrested. They want license from us. People get arrested for going to dig sand. We use the sand to build houses. White people do not want us to live in peace. We also get arrested when we go and cut firewood in the forest. They say we must preserve the forests, preserve nature. When we slaughter animals for ceremonies, they say we are abusing animals, yet these are our ways. They want us to use their guns. We use a spear here so that the cow can fall down at the kraal and we talk to our ancestors in order for a ceremony to begin. These are our traditions.

It seems like what would really help us is to get our knowledges documented in a book and this book can be one of the prescribed literature books in basic schooling. From Grade R, children can start learning about themselves and their ways. This would be a way for the schools to take forward what we teach here at home. In this way, both the knowledges of the home and of the school would go together. The formally educated children do not want to hear about our knowledges, they undermine what we tell them because it is not written. *Maybe it would be better if it would appear in their books at school.* They can learn from those books. They do not believe or take serious what is not documented. The children feel they know better than us. As a result, the formally educated look down on those who are not formally educated. Even the teachers are distant from the community and do not understand our ways. How would they be able to link knowledges? The learners will obviously struggle

too then. They do not want to call us as older people at the school so that some of the knowledges of the school can enter through older people not only teachers because a majority of them are not from this context. Now the children do not listen to anyone other than the teacher because they have alienated us from the school. This is why the children do not listen to us. If Indigenous ways could be emphasised at school, things would be better for us because our wealth is in our land. You heard us saying we used to dig for each and every medicine we need, we used to produce food from this land.

Consequently, at home too, the older people have now let go of facilitating the home knowledges. Usually, a child goes to the garden early in the morning to fulfil his or her duties before going to school. This is no longer happening. Letting go and destroying our ways have now left us poor and have created suffering. Food is dependent on money now. We value more the things that come from having money. We do not plough much. We have no cattle. The school working together with homes could play a role in retaining and assisting people to not lose their African beliefs and values. Schools should be focusing on African knowledges and teach learners about their African histories. We too, at home, we should not stop but continue teaching about who we are and where we come from.

We have to let go of *amasiko nezithethe* (traditions and rituals) now. In normal AmaBomvane ways, we would be doing the celebration of girls coming of age now (*Ukuthonjiswa*) because it is June. It is school break. Those who are getting married would do so. Those who are working would come back home now. Those with young children would perform *Ukuqatywa on children* (a ceremony where a mother together with the child apply a red substance called *imbola* on the child's face and body). In cases where the mother is not present, the child would be assisted by the father's sister. After this, a goat would be slaughtered and this ceremony is called *Imbeleko*, that is, the process introducing the child to the ancestors of the home. Only a few households have kept and are still doing this tradition. It would be a time where we make a lot of traditional beer (*Ukusila iindywala ezinkulu*). During these times, all this is rarely done because people are now Christianised (*Basindisiwe*). This belief system is even contradictory, people do not preach the same thing and there are many *Jesuses with everyone preaching about their own differently*. We are getting confused. We go to church too and we can see that we have moved far away from our rituals. We hardly make traditional beer for ancestors (*Ukusilela abantu abadala abangasekhoyo*). When you do that now and you come across Christians, they will ask you, "are they going to rise from the dead and come drink this beer or is this going to be drunk by



you?” No such thinking existed here before Christianity. It is difficult now and we are struggling since we left our Indigenous beliefs because Christianity is not an African belief system. An African one is the one we have left behind.

Another contributor is the introduction of toxic alcohol to the AmaBomvane and how it intoxicates them. This alcohol such as beers and brandy which everyone buys is harmful to our health status. We were all civilised here before this alcohol from the West came. This alcohol disturbs our quality of life. Formally educated people (Amagqobhoka) make big parties and everyone would access alcohol there. From there children continue drinking non-stop. The only beer we had is the one we brew for four days only to be drunk on the fifth day. This is an African beer which Amagqobhoka look down upon as they see the bought alcohol as holding a better status. We meet our children on the streets carrying this alcohol and you cannot complain because they will hit you. Boys are impregnating girls at young ages. You will never see the parents, we old people are raising these children on our ways depending on this grant money. This is the way of life we are enduring these days. These are the problems of modernity.

We cannot say everything is bad though. There are a lot of things we learn from education like washing our hands frequently. It has also assisted us with our bad ways like the practice of *Ukuthwala* (this was a practice of arranged marriages where later younger women and/or girls ended up being subjected to forced marriage to older men they do not have a relationship with). Schooling has assisted with preventing these arranged marriages and the violence these young women were subjected to. It has also assisted with the practice of physically violating children to a point of injury. So, we do see the good that came with schooling. On the other hand, schooling alienates our children from our rituals and traditions. You see, our children, after schooling they do not want to be involved. They do not follow the values of the home and do not want to participate in key activities of the home. I guess what we are trying to say is that, one side of the education system is good while the other is bad. Education has assisted in making us see things we could not see. Things like family planning are good and have come with education. Us, the uneducated used to just give birth one child after another as a married woman.

Another change started when teachers started distancing themselves from villages. Teachers used to stay in the village and were well respected with the sharing of knowledge not only happening in school but also in the community as they constantly engaged with villagers.

Teachers used to educate everyone while also still sustaining the role of older people as custodians and transmitters of knowledge. Teachers now stay in the cities and only meet the child at school. They commute daily from here to Umtata. The teachers have become superior beings who look down on our people. They see themselves as better than the people. The problem started there. Now knowledge comes with children and they undermine their older people. Adults resist the knowledge too when it comes from children. This is to say, education and health should mutually reinforce one another. *'Health is life so education should service our lives'*. Equally so, as we live, we constantly educate ourselves to improve our lives. When it is linked to who we are and where we are, education would bring positive health gains. There should not be contradictions between home and school knowledges because *'no one knowledge is enough and complete'*, but no knowledge should be seen as better than the other.

Language is also important because it comes with its ways of being and living. English has taken a superior status in these schools and it is not acceptable. Knowing English makes people think they are better because it has been given that status as language over others. See how the teachers think they are better than the people in these villages because they can speak English. Children grow up learning from this behaviour and undermine their own languages and ways of being. They then start leaving for the cities because a better life is associated with cities, yet it is not always the case. But the reality is, they struggle in those cities, they come back home and still struggle.

## The Hobeni Village narrative of older people

The community of Hobeni, like Gusi, is also located closer to the centre. Only older people co-constructed this narrative, no middle generation were accessed. The older people of Hobeni demonstrated much joy as they narrated how their lives used to be like before intense interference of formal education into their cultural ways. Older women shared in excitement (as if they could not wait for the interview to start) saying, we used to wear *Inkciyo* (literally translated as a small beaded apron), do you hear me? We would herd, we grew up participating in the task of herding, being disciplined, and taught how to herd. Being cultured was part of the discipline we received from our parents as well as being prepared to learn and respect everyday activities of the home. We grew up working at home, hand-grinding and maize milling, milking cows and planting to ensure food security at home. We did not buy food from the shops. During weekends, we attended *imitshotsho* (young men dance gatherings) *neentlombe* (traditional health practitioners ceremony involving drumming, dance and songs moving around in a circle stomping feet to the beat) for us. We learnt everything through doing and participating in these activities to enable us to learn how to do the work.

We were happy then because these ways were good for our health. In cases where we needed a specific item, we would go exchange mealies at the shop for the item we need. We lacked not, we were not stranded about where to go and which doctor to go to because we lived healthy lives. Illness was scarce. Our children become sexualised now when wearing some of these traditional attires and it is claimed that they invite rape. We did not have these happenings. Young girls used to walk confidently with their breasts out wearing *inkciyo* and were proud. The world has changed drastically. *(One older man of the village expressed sadness on his face as he shared this issue of dressing code and how men do not respect women but look at them as sexualised bodies when clothes are revealing).*

*Sakhululeka!* (We became free)

They narrated: Becoming free came with promises of an easier happy life. In this, our ways were left behind as everyone wanted to be free and have an easier life. We let go of maize milling and hand-grinding. Shops took over and became the providers of food. We stopped doing our own work to produce our own food. Our ways seemed to not have a place anymore.

Schooling introduced a different perspective of life, it came with an imposed culture causing different clashes. It is very hard to relate. During the times of our culture, there was no hunger because we did not lack food, we did not need to go buy food because we focused on producing our own food.

We trace this back to the arrival of missionaries thus introducing religion. Change occurred with first the introduction of institutionalised schooling with children learning a different language. As this continued, it became clear Black people occupied the lowest social status and became a slave to a white person. This was a result of removing people from their culture and associated ways of living. The need for money to survive was introduced as a way of life but money was accessed by those who have been to school. Ways of dressing started changing from our own people. These changes came from the school because it is Amagqobhoka who started showcasing this change, it is not our own culture. Africans' culture started disappearing slowly. *Money came with hunger.*

*Divisions started among the AmaBomvane!*

The haves and have-nots became clear with the haves being those who accepted the conversion (*ubugqobhoka*). The rite of passage of women was a very valued practise here with young girls staying indoors for a period of a month of after which they come out and a big celebration is made like the rite of passage of men. Traditional beer would be made, and cattle and goats would be slaughtered. Christianity said all these ways are devilish thus pushing those who accepted this system to let go of their traditional ways. This is where all the divisions were further deepened with those who were for and those against labelling traditional ways as backward and old. Relationships were broken down with the two connotations (*amaqaba namagqobhoka*) strengthening.

We started becoming aware that this education we were receiving was not good for us because it alienated us further and further away from our base. This education revealed a racially hierarchical social order. Despite the changes in the education system and its curriculum, there was still no clear change in poor outcomes. The problem is that this system removes our children from their base. When our children struggle, teachers have no patience to understand the issues. We see children just being moved from one grade to another with no improvement in learning.

You see, the education of our children is not valued. It disconnects our children from nature. It robs them of understanding their link with their environment. Our environment has significant meaning to us, we are part of the environment and it is a part of us. When we breathe, the trees are breathing towards us, we interchange breathing like that. *Education is meant to emphasise this connection.* All their subjects should speak to their lives and everything taught should relate to serving life. That is what education should be about. To be educated is when you are able to translate and apply your knowledge and make a difference and this must be attested to by the people. We must live our education. You see, when you go to your maternal home, there is medicine there – that is a tree. Same applies to when you go to your grandparents' homestead, your father and so on – there are trees and these are medicines. We have always had medicines from our land for every person and each sickness here but these new sicknesses we see today, we are not able to treat them. *People are no longer eating food from this soil but other soils and mostly processed foods.* This is bringing alien sicknesses which we have no natural herbs for to facilitate healing. Should you get ill in those days, you would sometimes hear that you need a particular ritual or medicines either from your maternal or paternal soil or even your marital soil. This means, you are able to get sick and requiring medicine of one of these homes and their linked soil.

These lessons formed the central chain of the relationship we have with plants, animals, trees and the soil of which our culture, traditions and rituals are embedded in. Understanding this connection enables us to respect and nurture our surroundings because they also nurture us. Let us look at animals as an example. Each clan relates with a specific animal. We also perform our traditions and rituals using animals. For instance, here we use goats for ceremonies such as *Ukuhlanjwa, ukukhutshwa, imbeleko* for children while some use cows for rituals like *ukuqatywa, ulwaluko*. All these things link us with all creation. Cattle live on grass, human beings live on cattle, we all live on water.

Now, our children do not know our traditions. A clear example is that of having lost how we name newly-wedded brides. Young people nowadays do not like the names which started with “No” because they do not know the meaning embedded in this type of naming. We used these names so that the first-born child must continue the linkage with the mother to strengthen the relationship with the mother. Now we have names that start with vowels. These are not names of our culture. With the new names, there is not much difference between the bride's maternal identity and that of the marriage. The children are getting alienated from their culture and we blame the schooling system for it. Also, parents were the

ones responsible for naming, but young people want to name their own brides and children. This generation is also rejecting the notion of ancestors, they say it is ancient beliefs, they do not want to hear anything (participants shared a good laugh). It is funny but it is a devastating situation that we are in. There is no reflection of cultural studies in schools. There is also specific histories featured but not local histories. Children are named Bush instead of Oliver Tambo, Biko to name a few, yet these historical icons bring so much relevance to our struggles. Teachers too do not understand our context resulting in inaccurate mixed information about cultures.

Our children do not know proverbs and idioms and the lessons embedded in these. If you say to children nowadays, '*Isinamva liyabukwa*' (meaning one who laughs last laughs best) or say to them '*Intaka evuka mva kunezinye lilifa lezagweba*' (meaning those who are late are bound to lose and to be judged harshly), they do not know the meanings. These are proverbs and idioms which form part of the grammar of isiXhosa but they do not know them. They are not deep in their own language, they lose key aspects of culture and we have lost our children to those with money, who take them to private schools. In these private schools, the home language becomes an additional language while English takes priority. Language is an instrument of culture. Our culture is contained in our languages.

What then happens after this schooling? They start becoming town fellows, they get jobs and start looking down on their own backgrounds labelling them as "*the poorest of the poor, useless places that they cannot stay in at all*". Urbanity takes over their lives with its fast-expensive way of life. There is a problem with such an education. That is what they are prepared for, to serve the urban areas. They are not prepared to plough back in their own contexts where they belong. There is no sense of social responsibility. *Iintlombe* (traditional health practitioners ceremony involving drumming, dance and songs moving around in a circle stomping feet to the beat) and *imitshotsho* (*Young men's dance*) were ended by formal schooling. It is very difficult for our children to settle in a life of cattle, an agricultural type of life where we farm cattle and work our fields for living, not for economic purposes. To them, it is not modern to live this simple life we are embracing. There is a bit of a clash between our traditional way of life versus the way of life imposed by formal schooling. But this imposed lifestyle is a fantasy they do not experience it hence our people continue to struggle even when they have converted themselves. Government professionals when they come here, they too pretend as if they do not understand our way of life and that the majority of our people have not been formally educated. They come here and speak in English. Information

is mostly inaccessible to our people because of inappropriate mode of delivery, language used and forms of engagement.

We need to stick to what is good about us and take what is good from what is coming and introduced to us and relate accordingly. But in all this AmaBomvane need to emerge and not lose themselves.

We are always misrepresented so we need to represent ourselves. Formal schooling is good and we want to be part of it but it should not marginalise who we are. For instance, we have hoes here which we used in our traditional dances like *imitshotsho neentlombe*, that is when we still had these events taking place. These weapons were not used for fighting but are part of the dance. These dances are hardly represented anywhere. These are the good things about our past which the world must know about.

The way we see it, the schools could be using these opportunities and engage learners in what you are doing now – research. Our children should be the ones introduced to this research and investigate about their knowledges here and write up these as part of education in the school. In this way, they would be more in touch with their local histories, culture, and knowledge.



### **The Xhora Village narrative of older people**

Xhora is the cluster of villages that is located closer to the town of Xhora and the main road connecting villages to town. Its participants were a mix of older people and the middle generation. The way of life, the houses and the way people dress are more similar to a township type of set up. There are more brick houses and you hardly see people fetching firewood and cooking outside. The participants here also seemed to not have much to say and expressed not leaning to their traditional ways anymore. This is one village where the chief was unavailable throughout my stay in the village mainly because the chief does not reside in the village but in Gatyana (a neighbouring community). This status of a lack of presence of the chief left a sense of tension and no leadership in the village compared to other villages where the presence of traditional leadership is felt.

The knowledges of the home and those of the school should speak to one another but they currently do not relate at all. We used to see relations when we were studying but not now. For example, in this time, there is technology unlike before. During our times, we would learn at school and we would practice what we learnt at home. Nowadays, it is only that workbook with homework that is available. That is where it ends. Even when you attempt to assist with this homework, you fail because there is a huge shift in what we learnt and what they learn now. Learning now is no longer speaking to the context of our homes here.

Firstly, at home children are taught about their culture, the bible as well as how to pray. Those are the basics. When you go to school, there would be biblical studies. You can see how it is connected but we do not have that connection now.

Secondly, children learnt how to plough, watering the plants and everything related to working the land. This connected with the subject of agriculture at school because we are an agricultural nation here. Children had plots at school and at home planting vegetables. After school they knew they would water their plots. We no longer see these things at school. When we continue with these at home, the children are not interested to participate at all.

Teachers also understood this in the sense that there was a negotiation of times to balance out time for home activities and those of the school. For example, in cases where children had to take cattle, sheep and goats to the dip (a bath place designed for the control of flies, ticks, mites and to kill lice etc.), they would have a separate time for their school examinations. This indicated that both spaces were valued. Nowadays, children blatantly refuse to

participate mainly in home activities and they do not know how to do these activities. There is always a clash between home activities and school homework. If we are eating our home-grown chicken, they tell you it is hard, they want frozen chicken from the shops.

We used to have needlework for sewing skills and knitting. These skills were important for our way of living but seem to be pushed aside now in most schools. The change is so deep that the children do not even value the schooling.

Democracy came with rights of our children but has really failed in its implementation to instil the responsibilities aspect. We can no longer discipline our children because we are told we abuse them. Now they do not listen to us. It is us, the custodians, who are struggling. The chiefs too are suffering as they have no power, councillors have taken over. This has created divisions and tensions in the communities with the chiefs being more at risk. Chiefs have become inferior, councillors are superior. Children have become unruly. They no longer value any activities of the home. They do not want to plough or look after cattle. We force them where we can to participate in these essential activities. This is a result of a democratic society where children rule themselves. We must go back to how these rights bring clashes at times. As an older person, you are even the first one to wake up while children sleep till late morning.

We used to have books that related to our cultures and we no longer see those books now. Different story books that focused on the history of our cultures like “*ingqumbo yeminyanya*” (The Wrath of the Ancestors), “*neentombi zincebo*” (Girls always have a plan) were very good. These books taught us different lessons at school and when you go home you will see these happening. We learnt about our rituals and traditions and that is how the two knowledge spaces linked. We had a book called “*Izaci namaqhalo*” (proverbs and idioms). Our children do not know these. They do not know *iintsingiselo* (meaning) of these. We do not know why these books were taken out. Lessons on culture are now superficially introduced in arts and culture and life orientation but there is no meaning embedded, they are once off. Why was the isiXhosa literature taken out? These books related to our cultures and ways of living here. This also brings the issue of our languages. They are not given the same platform and value. We need schools that emphasise home language from early grades so that they can be grounded. Our children struggle with their own languages. It is important to know their origins, and this is embedded in their languages. They cannot only know English as it comes with its own context too.

The problem is that our knowledges are not recognised at all, that is where the problem starts. The education system marginalises our knowledges. All people are born with a knowledge, a knowledge they use at home to navigate their lives. The way we see it, you cannot say a person has no knowledge. Everyone is born into a knowledge system in any locality no matter how little that knowledge is. Everyone is a knower. It does not matter which locality, even rural areas, we are all experts of our own environments. You cannot say that because people have no formal education they have no knowledge. They have the home knowledge they are born into.

This knowledge is learnt through shadowing the older people at home. A boy shadows his father, a girl shadows her mother. They then learnt specific home activities and start participating. Then there are rituals and traditions. We learn these from the older generation as well. This is how knowledge is transferred. This is how children learn to play an active role in their wellbeing. We will never stop being slaves until we do things for ourselves.

## Talking circles with young people of Bomvanaland

All the young people who participated were still at school. I was not successful in gaining access to young people who had dropped out and those who chose to not attend any form of formal schooling. There were two groups of learners. The one bigger group consisted of learners who were attending at Hobeni Junior Secondary School and access was gained at school. The second group (smaller in size) of learners consisted of older learners who were attending school in Xhora and were all at high school level, there was only one young man among 3 young woman. The older learners were accessed through the community. No young people residing in Nkanya and Xhora were accessed.

Validating the key activities highlighted by their elders, learners from Hobeni villages shared their involvement in communal activities which include: *“fetching water and firewood, herding, working in the gardens which includes planting, harvesting and watering plants, maize milling and grinding, cleaning, milking cows and preparing food at home.”*

Activities related to producing food was highlighted: *“Participating in home food production activities helps us not only at home but also at school in terms of doing well in agriculture as we are familiar with ways of working the land. Additionally, we are able to be provided with food at school due to having ploughed gardens.”*

Traditions and rituals are also taught at home: *“We learn about our traditions and rituals at home whereas at school we do not learn about these. We also get to learn about ways of behaving. For instance, women and girls do not sit on the left-hand side of the home, they sit behind the door, that is to say, we sit on the right side all the time and it is important to remember these ways. We do not ask what would happen should we sit on the other side, we just do as we are told”.*

Additionally, the learners elaborated on what they are taught at home: *“We are taught how to prepare food and clean using cow dung. We do not learn these at school but at home, we fetch firewood guided by elders on how to perform these tasks. We do not just do it, we are shown, we learn by doing. It is not the same at school because we do not do, we get explanations only”.*

The Gusi young people elaborated further on the significant role played by their grandmothers in educating them about grooming themselves followed by their participation in key activities of the home: *“Our grandparents always remind us that they will one day die so when such a time comes, we need to be independent. They always say they are teaching us*

*work in preparation for when they are no longer with us. This encourages us to follow their teachings”.*

The young man (who was the only one in the group) in the group also validated that the grandmother plays more of a role in his growing up with no mention of the grandfather – learning first through observing: *“we observe our grandmothers as they do the task of the home and later practise the tasks under their guidance. They love teaching us through showing us how tasks are done”.*

*“It is important to plough because it saves money and does not require us to have and spend money every time one has to eat. It (is) equally important for us to live well in our homes where the older person must have humility to the young one and the young one must also be humble to the older one. Likewise, the young one is to respect the older person and the older person must respect the young person accordingly. We must not always be in conflict with one another so that we can live in home with good well-being”.*

Such a way of living extends to the schooling environment maintaining the principle that every one of the age of your parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters is your parent: *“at school too, we must respect our teachers because they are parents to us, we must not look at them as not parents”.* These learners affirmed that this value was being emphasised both at school and at home.

The older group of learners focused more on the challenges they encounter within the school environment where they also receive another form of education thus making learning difficult: *“The schools we attend are distinct – we leave our homes having learnt from the home to be a responsible person. When we get to the schools in town, we meet different peers who grew up differently as we are from different homes and we do not disclose that we are from rural backgrounds. We get there and aspire to be like them, behave like them so that we can feel comfortable, fit in and look like them of which it is about living a lie as we come from different socio-economic backgrounds”.*

The learners felt pressured to want to assimilate and fit in, ending up demanding financial support from the family while knowing that the family cannot afford this change of lifestyle: *“We see our friends living differently and we want to be like them and feel good about ourselves. Even the teachers educating us are from big towns and they do not understand our ways of living here so they cannot really bring us back to reality. They focus only on the syllabus they are teaching, they do not understand our difficulties, they cannot motivate and*

*encourage us as part of grooming us. The teachers also force us to contribute in the financial related initiatives of the school without understanding that it will be difficult for us to get the money”.*

There are issues of lack of tolerance and patience from teachers: *“When you struggle with a specific lesson, you get left behind. When you ask questions, the teachers get irritated. They pay more attention to the learners coming from better backgrounds or those they consider to be performing well in class. The class discrimination starts with the teachers, it destroys our self-confidence and builds up feelings of wanting to drop out at school. We start doubting ourselves and feelings of inferiority because we are always made to feel like that because of our backgrounds. They are not willing to even entertain our questions when we do not understand. You go to a teacher and you see from their facial expression that they are so irritated by the question you are asking. What happens is that we stop questioning then even when we are lost. Sometimes you note that the teacher has made a mistake, but you get into trouble when you raise that. Teachers will tell us that we think we know better”.*

The young people of Xhora ended their narratives by citing how their lives are filled with a sense of being drawn to assimilate and desire other ways of life. They identified this as an everyday struggle: *“We like things associated with white people and more urban-like areas. Even our teachers tell us that life begins at university, so we start imagining a different yet better life that we want to go to as well. We think about what would make us come back to rural areas if there is a better life. We think about how we can come back and stay in a rondavel after being educated.... we are educated on this ‘good life’ that is why we want it. It is like if you want to follow the school ways you have to let go of your home ways. We need to be taught about the disadvantages of the presented ‘good life’ of the cities as well so that we can be better informed. We even let go of our traditions and rituals. We need to also learn how to bring together the school and community ways so that we can exercise our choices and autonomy carefully”.*

## **Narratives of teachers across villages - “You get knowledge from home, you get knowledge from the school”**

The following data emerged across the individual and group interviews done with educators of the sampled schools. The analysis was done across the transcripts thus giving multiple perspectives from educators that best explain the case.

When I first met the teachers in each of the schools of Xhora, they were resisting participating and wanted assurance that this is a safe space to share. The learners resisted initially because they were not sure they would be able to contribute to the study. To them, it became a scary experience where you get asked questions and you must get them right. This was not a space like that. I had to re-narrate several times what the older people of the villages are expressing as challenges related to linking up with the formal school system and how the school assists or not in facilitating social change in these communities. This process assisted to get both the teachers and learners to understand the study in depth and feel much more at ease to share their own narratives of what is happening. A majority of the teachers from Gusi and Hobeni schools live in the villages while the teachers who participated from Xhora village and the TVET college all reside in Umtata and commute daily to school.

### ***First conversations***

The teachers began by recognising that when educating a child, the vantage point is always the “known” and then move to the “unknown” as a principle of educating and thus acknowledging that learners come to the school with a knowledge system from the home. When asked how these learners and their communities know what they know, the teachers responded that people know what they know through ‘doing’ and participating in specific activities. Doing is the key construct on which people know what they know with guidance from older people who facilitate the transference of knowledge from one generation to another. In this regard, participants affirmed that people are born to a knowledge system, thus knowing begins at home.

*“when you start educating a child, you start during the breastfeeding stage. How do you educate a child during that time? When you breastfeed a child, there is a time when the child will bite your nipple and your reaction to this behaviour is a form of educating a child in terms of right and wrong even through facial expression. A child begins to learn. As the child grows spending time with you as a parent at home, you start teaching them Yes or No, you teach the child how to relate and speak to elders, you teach respecting all adults and seeing*



*them as parents, you teach them how to share - that is all education happening in the home. You take them to church and teach them the principle of giving through Sunday collection, to name a few examples. When the child enters the school, they come with this knowledge learnt from the home as a form of education. They start at school from foundation learning to recognise and write letters, words, and their own name etc. ”*

Participants shared that this knowledge serves the living of human beings: *“you get knowledge from home, you get knowledge from school, you put these together and come up with something that would make you live because without knowledge we cannot live. It needs to put bread on the table and what the older people here are saying is that this education is not enabling them to live in their ways they choose. This may be true. It is this knowledge that you come and plant in your community. When you can do this, you will stop saying you are getting nothing from education”*.

In this articulation, the participants noted the divergence between home and school knowledge with school knowledge seen as commodified: *“the school knowledge is purified and packaged ready for schooling you see...it is like you must use it to make money and other commodities. There in the communities it is the knowledge to feed yourself”*.

Some teachers drew examples from their own personal experiences to further highlight the situation of the status of education in these Indigenous villages which led to this alienating effect from their own Indigenous ways. In ancient times, *“formal education was not so much relevant to us because we could sustain ourselves without formal education credentials. People lived well because they worked their land with their own cattle”* Now, *“it started with the whole narrative that such a life is (a) hard life so if you want to live what was perceived as a simple happier life you have to go to school as those who had formal education presented their lives as easier good lives, where you do not produce your own food but buy already produced food”*.

The participants shared that no one wants to participate in these food production activities now using their own knowledges. People started going to school in order to get away from such work of the home thus raising negatives connotation that working the land is for people who have not been to formal schooling, that is, *Amaqaba* with populated common sayings such as *“how can (I) go to the fields when I am educated”*. Such narratives started removing everyone from the Indigenous ways of living, knowing and thinking and no one seems interested in unlearning these perceptions. *“We started undermining our ways in the sense*

*that how can an educated person be looking all dirty because you get dirty when you work in the fields producing food for your household*". This situation led the teachers to be faced with learners who seem uninterested in learning their own ways of being, knowing and thinking. The learners also see their ways as a hard way of living and being thus aspire what is perceived as a good easy life, but such a life requires one to have money.

Most of the teachers, whether they recognised that their learners come with valid knowledge from the homes or not, were faced with learners who seemed uninterested in home-knowledges and its ways of living. Furthermore, the teachers based in town had additional perceptions related to what they have noticed: *"the children here do not look at education as a priority. The parents here also do not really value the education and that, as teachers, we want these learners to be successful. So, you will find that most of our learners here pay more attention to other things, for instance, in June the young men pay attention to going through the rite of passage to manhood and end up staying behind in school work. Mostly, when they come back from the initiation, they do not want schooling. Also, most of the young women go through schooling while they are already married. They get married young and become wives and mothers. The priority is not education but to be married and have their own homes just like anciently. While they are at school then, they have to worry about home duties and when they get home they have to attend to these wifely and motherly duties and not be able to study and do homework. This happens a lot here and it also contributes to the failure and drop-out rate...they are groomed to aspire to different things and education is not high in the list"*.

Despite these perceptions, some knowledges from the home were seen as important as they include origins of the people and assist in building identities of the children. However, teachers encounter various challenges in integrating and engaging the diverse ways of knowing, thinking and what is known.

### ***Introducing IK within the school curriculum: challenges and opportunities***

Teachers' narratives of introducing IK moved from alluding to the current everyday classroom practices (how they currently integrate home literacies) to an imagined classroom situation (how they imagine the current situation to be, including hopes and aspirations). They narrated how, at times, both the home and school knowledges feature in the classroom. They also shared how it is also challenging for them to draw on local knowledge. The

teachers started off with varied perceptions on how the two learning spaces (home and school) of learners currently speak to each other with some teachers emphasising that the introduction of knowledges from the home is dependent on each subject of study. While difficult on other subjects, the learning area cited as Arts and Culture seems to be the main subject example where the introduction of IK comes through clearly and with ease. Such a learning area tries to draw links, though not in depth, in terms of across all aspects of life.

*“Some learning areas try to address community needs but fail to go in detail. You would find that in Arts and Culture for example, they speak about Intonjane which is a ritual that is practised at home. The difference is that here at school we mainly dialogue about this tradition with explanation while, at home, it is done practically. In essence, here at school we theorise while the home deals with practical. It is easy for them to engage theoretically at school when they can relate that this practise is actually done at home”.*

At times the children are expected to showcase their traditional clothing in celebration of key events like heritage but that is where it ends. Similarly, they also get to showcase some artistic designs from the home.

*“We ask them to make and bring ingobozi (weaved basket used for storage at home as depicted in figure 21 below) or Ingqayi (calabash container or beer pot). Ingobozi and Ingqayi are at home, they know, learn about it and use it at home. So, they go back home and design ingqayi with clay or ingobozi using dried river reed called Imisi in isiXhosa. If the theme is about cleaning, they have to bring these items from home. They make brooms from home and others make weaved mats also using river reed. When they bring these items at school, we learn about them. This is how the knowledges come together”.*



Figure 21: Ingobozi (Weaved basket)

The teachers noted though that this linkage is sometimes problematic in cases where gender clashes become evident. An example of a clash is that of Ulwaluko.

*“The practice of Ulwaluko tends to not feature a lot and it remains only a knowledge of the home because of the secrecy involved in it. Where it is featured, young men do not want to participate in the presence of young women, yet they want to participate in topics regarding young women like intonjane. Secondly, it is difficult to add teachings that would improve the practice of ulwaluko to avoid illnesses that could have been otherwise prevented because it is said boys are not meant to know about the process of manhood until they reach such a stage”.*

A clash in values becomes evident. The challenges experienced by teachers to introduce knowledges of the homes and build on them at school are influenced by the characteristics of time and space. Though not applicable to knowledges related to women, some knowledges relating to men are difficult to introduce within the school as they can only be spoken about in a specific place and specific time and stage of men for instance the stage of going to *ethontweni* (the place where young men undergoing the rite of passage to manhood stay). The home instils that certain topics have time and space to be talked about while the school is not operating from such values.

Teachers seemed to suggest that in a classroom, they are in a way faced with two curricula which they struggle to bring together. One is the officiated curriculum which they teach in

class. Another is a hidden curriculum that is not written down but also seems to be almost as strong as the officiated curriculum. This is the curriculum brought from the home and *“the learners act it out as they see it”* while some hide it because they have been told that it is only to be known by specific people. *“When we discuss ulwaluko, this secrecy is clearly demonstrated. This is another kind of teaching and we often have to juggle between the two teachings.”* The teachers here began to touch on what the older people had critiqued about the formal schooling giving children too much information. Older AmaBomvane had stated; *“The school speaks broadly and is direct on issues as they are whereas at home we are mostly indirect about issues when educating children mostly passing lessons through idioms and proverbs”*. Teachers agreed that, within the home:

*“Children would not be told directly about meanings and consequences of specific behaviours. For instance, children would not be told directly that they should not meet with young men but would be told that they should be home before sunset as the older people knew what young people get up to once it gets dark as no one sees them. Our parents would not specifically stipulate details such as what happens, and we also would not question but obey”*.

This is managed differently at school: *“we talk about family planning encouraging learners to go to the clinic for contraceptives to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancies and go in detail about what happens when you start having a boyfriend and engage in sexual intercourse. The parents do not understand this approach and feel that teachers reveal too much information to children thus causing many social problems such as making children want to explore.”*

The different approaches influence levels of participation of learners in a classroom. Older people refer to formally educated people as lacking manners because of talking openly about issues as part of education. Consequently, learners tend to not participate in some key topics because of fear of being viewed as knowing too much and being forward, thus rendered vulnerable. When there are no clashes between what comes from the home and that which is at school, *“the level of participation can be an indicator of learning and you see whether they can relate or not. They will question, raise arguments and you start working together as a teacher with the learners”*.

When what is taught is not speaking to the reality of learners, more gaps are seen in learners. The lack of varied opportunities to learn about alien topics and concepts remains a challenge

for teachers. Teachers felt that they must speak about geysers and swimming pools which many of their learners have never seen in Xhora. Using English language as the language of instruction was an added challenge:

*“You will find out that they cannot relate at all to many learning areas compounded by the issues of language of teaching and learning which is English. They struggle to understand and there is not much we can do here to enable learning because even at home there is (are) no opportunities to practice the English language. It then becomes complex because a child does not know what is being talked about and does not understand the language of instruction. They end up not understanding even the question asked”.*

Hence the importance of language was raised; *“it is important to be taught in your own language. For instance, if you look at Cape Town, children there learn in Afrikaans which is their home language and their performance is high. I think if our children were also taught in their own home languages, they would perform better. Even question papers should come in their own language but it is only English and Afrikaans that we have now apart from the home language subjects”.* All the teachers across the villages shared this language issue as a challenge.

Additionally, teachers seemed to struggle to facilitate co-creation of knowledge within the classrooms. Generally speaking,

*“Though we speak of integration in curriculum, in reality the background of the learners we teach here is non-existent in the curriculum, it is not recognised and there is (are) no resources afforded to expose children to what they need to know beyond their contexts to bridge the gap of preparing them for the outside world as well”* – a teacher based in the school in town shared.

While a teacher based in Hobeni (village based closer to the centre) posited *“we have what we call integration in curriculum terminologies, you find here that what is done at home is almost represented in school. Concepts may be approached differently compared to home but there is some level of integration”*

There is minimal representation of rural contexts in the curriculum. The urban context is always evident and used as the yardstick for learning examples thus leaving teachers in rural areas to struggle with interpreting the syllabus and adjusting it according to the rural context that a rural child can relate to.



*“We do not have a curriculum that speaks to learners in rural areas. This is why we (rural-based teachers) experience so much challenges here in rural areas as a result our children never perform like those situated in urban areas. At times we complain to the people who develop curriculum stating that they only have in mind the urban way of life as the context when putting together curriculum and forget the rural context which has a different way of life. Assessments are then all the same for both rural and urban children. One time they were asked about a TV soapie called Muvhango but most of our learners have no access to television at home, how will they know this. It becomes stressful to children and comes with unintended hidden messages such as this context is making me stay behind it may be better to move to the cities. This tells learners that rural life is not good. We need rural representatives in the development of curriculum. It becomes difficult for us to also teach because we too are not exposed to some things. We do not even have access to computers and related training, how can we begin to assist children”.*

Teachers expressed that the lack of representation of a rural way of life in the curriculum is of concern in that the subtext of curriculum is telling learners that they need to change for their lives to be better and that their current life is not a better life. This education comes across with different values, different ways of living and pressurising learners to change through what they are taught in class. The concern was that it is not easy to change these perceptions and that education may not have a role in changing these perceptions.

*“We want to change this but it is not easy. There is no hope for change. It is education that imposes that our lives must change and be urbanised. Have you seen houses of educated people here? The difference is obvious in the eye when you enter these villages. You can easily differentiate between the formally educated and uneducated. Do you see it? Learners grow up seeing and exposed to the difference as well as from what they are taught in class. What they are taught supports this perception that there needs to be a change of lifestyle and their lifestyles around them also show them the difference but this difference is not valued but imposed a need to change without choice because they see suffering from not changing”.*

Sometimes teachers also promote this imposition in classrooms in their narratives on what they perceive as influences that learners should take from school: *“They can see the teachers who are here, what they are driving so they can also dream about such. So that is what we always tell them that they must drive more expensive cars, build better houses rather than staying in rondavels without windows and whatever is the situation at home”.*



As a result, one teacher did not see the value of advocating IK and education, learning about culture and local history: *“I do not see the value really, I do not know whether others see value because it is difficult for people to change now. I mean, it would be difficult to leave the modern life to our Indigenous way of life. Everyone wants to move forward now and not look back”*. What is referred to as back is the Indigenous way of life, it is seen as being backwards to remain true to indigeneity: *“The curriculum in learning areas such as arts and culture[and] tries to connect people with these Indigenous ways by getting learners to wear their traditional attires for specific occasions but that is where it ends. Beyond this, all that is Indigenous everyone wants to lose.”*

At this point I referred the participant to what the older people had shared; *“if our children do not know where they come from then they will not know where they are going”*. The response was that: *“Yes, I am aware of that statement. Let me make an example, you see when people planting here, they are cautious of animals going there throughout the planting season and until cultivation is completed. This is because once the cattle enter these ploughed fields, they would eat everything that is ploughed resulting to not wanting to carry on eating the grass but constantly want to target the ploughed fields for their own food. The cattle would get used to what they have tasted. This analogy is what happens to our learners here too. It is a big challenge. The imposed urban lifestyle looks rosy and that is what they want, they are not interested in their ways, it is not by choice but through imposed ways. Once they cross to this other side, you lose them completely. Another example is that we used to be woken up very early by our parents in the time of our generation. We would be told that the sun cannot rise while you are still asleep. They were preparing us for the time of work. Now, our children sleep and wake up when they want to, do you think they would still appreciate those ways of being woken up early to start your chores? They would not agree. In fact, they would say it is abuse but it was not abuse to us, it was a preparation of a later stage of our lives where we have to keep to time - the future as it is now, they knew what they were doing”*.

It seems though this participant agrees that there are useful ways of grooming children that could be carried forward as lessons, the perception remains that it will not be easy to carry them forward because of the promises of urban life that appear easy and better than the rural Indigenous life. Other teachers felt that not introducing IK including local history and culture opens the room for imposed change from learners: *“I think it is important that we teach our learners about who they are so that they can come out with strong identities and not want to change themselves and assimilate other people. This changing process where they lose*

*themselves influences their well-being as well because they end up participating in activities that clash with their own traditions and rituals. Here there is a belief that traditions are linked to one's health. One cannot let go of their own tradition and go perform another tradition of which they are not related to. This is where we see children losing themselves and acting out problematic behaviours. It is sometimes because they have not done specific traditions and rituals in their life".*

Seemingly it is important for teachers teaching in Indigenous communities to understand the environments and ways of communities they teach in. This is a part of class preparations for every teacher: *"You cannot go teach about ways of Amampondo whilst you are working in Bomvane. You can bring in different views and ways as part of the lesson so that learners learn about diverse ways and dialogue about them without imposing to them that one tradition is superior to the other. So it is important for teachers to learn about the context in order to prepare context specific lessons".*

As a result, some teachers shared the sentiments of older people stating that schooling has an alienating effect in the sense that people end up letting go of their practices and ways of knowing. This letting go means opening gaps for important lessons which were taught through these Indigenous practices. One example was that of discipline, considering that the biggest crisis in AmaBomvane villages is unruly children.

*"According to the culture of AmaBomvane, there used to be what they call Imitshotsho. This was a space where young men were taught discipline with rules to be adhered to. A lot of Indigenous education took place in those platforms. Now, children of today never participated in any of these platforms and are stuck between Western and traditional culture with hardly no positive values to follow. They end up following any culture because they are not grounded in their own. This situation affects our children all the way to the space of work because they do not understand themselves, they are just followers. The effects continue to the next generation because our ways are passed from generation to generation but if the one passing the knowledge is confused, it becomes problematic".*

Equally important is the need to have role models who are formally educated but still value, practice and remain true to UbuBomvane: *"Everyone here even the older people, once their economic status gets lifted up, they want to be closer to the city and towns, they cannot stand this way of life. You see in the olden days, we had people who had a higher socio-economic status and in those days wealth was according to cattle owned and farming but you would not*

*see them changing, there are no role models showcasing an integrated way of life. Those who have a better status now are assimilating city life and you see even their houses change and no one wants to live in a rondavel. They look down on those who still maintain the Indigenous lifestyle. It is like you cannot prosper while still remaining true to your Indigenous ways”.*

According to the participants, chiefs could better play the role of being role models nowadays because some of them live an integrated way of life, but the introduction of councillors undermined chiefs to an extent that no one respects nor looks up and listens to them. These stakeholders are having the potential to facilitate the interaction between parents at homes and schools. They would then take information back and forth between the schools and communities using the communal structures.

The problems are more nuanced because these knowledges are not documented but passed on orally from one generation to another. It seems, once the practices and activities where the Indigenous education happens are lost, the knowledge is also at risk of not being passed to the next generation: *“We used to have books at school but I do not know what happened to them. These books had lintsomi (stories) that assisted children because some of IKs are embedded in such stories and riddles. In these stories there would be a storyteller (uNobalisa) who was the main character according to the drama language or plays. This role would always be occupied by an older person (uMakhulu). Children learnt a lot there in terms of building their own character and differentiating right and wrong behaviour. It ended in schools and at homes now. The issue then is that in terms of discipline and instilling values to learners, the home and the school are no longer working together. There is that gap then in terms of linking children with their communities and schools with communities”*

The teachers used their own experiences as learners to display how such approaches to integrate, link knowledges as well as work together with parents seem to have been lost with children now not valuing and being uninterested in learning from their elders. The teachers who attempt to contextualise education seem to face learners who are uninterested in recognising the home as a source of education too. *“I do not see how we can separate these different knowledges, it really confuses me because when we were still learners, we used to learn about proverbs and idioms from our homes being taught by our grandmothers. We used to be sent from school to go ask our elders at home but the learners we have here are not interested. When you ask them to go investigate information from the home, they are*

*reluctant and are not interested in knowing such knowledges and they come back having not done such homeworks”.*

The reasons as to why learners seem uninterested in learning from the home include:

*“perhaps the introduction of technology has contributed because our learners are so hooked to their phones now, they do not have time for anything else. Parents too are to blame because they prefer private schools than these public schools so they also show how they do not trust us with their learners. This contributes to moving children away from their base and Indigenous ways. They do not educate their children about the village ways when they come back from these private schools and the children start being divided in the villages with others being better than others. Hence, the use of dividing words like Amaqaba and Amagqobhoka”.*

According to participants, it is important for learners to be on par with both knowledges because you cannot be strong with school knowledge without the foundational home knowledge. Equally they affirm that it is also difficult to survive with only the home knowledge without school knowledge in this era: *“Every story has two sides so when knowledges do not come together as diverse ideas, how will one extend their knowledge and thinking about life and living. You see, umtya nethunga (literally meaning the thong or string and the [milk] pail) are at home. Now, when they learn about such proverbs at home, it becomes easier to understand the meaning because they see and use this thing and pail at home. There is no cow at school for them to use the thong and the milking pail. Today, when you ask them about “umtya nethunga” they refer you to the shoe lace as ‘umtya’ thus losing meaning completely”.* Learners make better sense of content when they can relate to it.

The other cited challenge relates to home knowledges not being documented thus if you miss certain stages, it is not possible to catch up through reading it from books because the education itself is so orally and practically driven. This highlights the differences between Indigenous education and school education: *When we educate at school, we have aims and objectives which we must achieve through going through the different lesson plans. At home, education is not according to lesson plans which the learner must pass and is not textbook based but aims at self-actualising this person for living and preparing him or her for the journey of becoming. The ways of educating at home and at school are not the same in that way. IK is lifelong and life-oriented in short with its learners participating in activities to*

*learn. At school, the aim is to achieve that planned syllabus, there is no apprenticeship approach to learning like the home.*

Hence, according to the teachers, the older people of Xhora appreciate more the technical schools (of which there is only one in the whole of Xhora and is based in town) as they equip their children with practical skills that are more relevant to their village life. In this way, they see tangible outcomes that contribute to ploughing back in their communities: *“They like the technical school, they know that even if children do not continue with their education, they will come out of here with skills because we have consumer studies here where we cover knitting, cooking, civil and mechanical engineering. Parents favour the college because learners learn practical things, they learn how to build, sewing. Parents value such practical skills, it is some way of ploughing back to them.”*

However, when teachers were then asked if this curriculum supports the children to contribute to their communities - they responded; *“they do not plough back the reason is that after Grade 12 they sit at home because there are no opportunities. There is no money, most parents do not have money to send them to university”*. They also shared: *“most of them do not progress further and if they do not move out, you will see them at Boxer or Spar (supermarkets) working there. There is nothing else and some getting married immediately with men who work in mines, some are married to way older men. There is a lot of that happening you see”*.

The post-schooling situation seems to be more complex for the young people of Xhora villages despite the presence of a TVET college. I asked; where should they implement what they learn? Is it important where they choose to invest what they have learnt? *“You can implement it anywhere but the reason their children are not implementing what they have learnt in their own communities is because there are no jobs here for people. There are no opportunities for people to facilitate progress in their own communities. Where do you then implement it? They start moving out”* – The TVET college teacher responded.

I asked, “Should learners be able to choose to work in their communities? Do you think that is an important thing to do?” The teacher replied: *“They should choose but what is going to guide you is your learning area. What you learn can place you here or it can mean you have to move out. But as it is now, after closure of many programmes which were considered as more relevant here like agriculture – people were left with no choice but to go out”*

What would the ideal situation be? – I asked.

*“It is important to give back because that is why you go to school. You want to provide to the community, you want to uplift your community, nobody is going to come and uplift your community, you are given the light, you are given the knowledge”* – the teacher responded.

Other teachers alluded to the inflexible curriculum and its inability to adequately prepare learners for their local communities. Comments related to the different curricula were cited: *“CAPS is more oriented on tasks. It does not give allowance for exposing the learners to other things. The challenge then is that teachers focus on achieving these tasks and produce a report while leaving learners behind having not understood. There is that problem with CAPS. The focus then tends to be on how many tasks the teachers have achieved not learner performance. The previous curriculum which was OBE was too learner centred for us who are in contexts with scarcity of resources. Learners had to play an active role but with no resources, what drives one to play such a role. Teachers often went along with those who were self-driven while paying little to no attention to those who were not, not because they were choosing not to, but they had no means to fully play such a role.”*

According to the participants, such a curriculum seemed problematic for contexts where a majority of its older population is not formally educated as formal education has three legs, namely; a parent, learner and the teacher. Teachers expressed concerns related to the lack of involvement of parents at school. Problems cited included parents not attending meetings, not checking learners’ school work to check progress and not giving feedback. So, while older people express that they are not sure about what is taught in schools, teachers cite their lack of involvement as reasons for such unawareness. Teachers also link challenges to introducing IK to the lack of involvement of parents even when a lot of lessons require drawing on IKs.

Another teacher had a different view: *“I think CAPS allows for adaptations to reality and context”*. The question though is whether or not teachers are implementing these adaptations to ensure context specific lessons as some teachers believe that *“if learners come to school and study their books, listen to motivational talks from already qualified professionals, this would enable them to change their lives at home”*.

## **Conclusion**

The seven narratives above highlighted fundamental issues related to the current status of IKs within the South African education system as well as the complex interactions and dynamics. They also showed the potential role of relevance that could be played by IKs in addressing

the challenges of our education system should it be interfaced with formal schooling. AmaBomvane see centring their knowledges contributing to their health and well-being as Indigenous people. The stories emerged from within and across case story analysis. These findings will be expanded upon and discussed in the following discussion chapter as relating to the key questions of this study.



## **Chapter 7: Discussion: “Health is life so education should service our lives”**

## Introduction

Using the knowledges of AmaBomvane the study explored the potential relevance of their IKs in transforming formal schooling and education for better health and well-being. The homes and communities as sites of Indigenous learning have contributed to the education and socialisation of African children, yet the knowledge they contribute to the education of their children continues to be neglected. This case of narratives from AmaBomvane sought to answer three research questions:

- How do the AmaBomvane rural people experience the influence of the formal education system on their indigenous traditions and knowledges and their links to health and wellbeing?
- What do stakeholders (elders, youth and teachers) identify as some of the indigenous knowledge and ways of teaching and learning in these communities?
- In what ways can the indigenous knowledges and teaching and learning strategies of the AmaBomvane inform curriculum development and implementation in the formal schooling system?

The following discussion attempts to respond to these key questions drawing from the narratives of AmaBomvane, and reflecting on current literature.

### 1. AmaBomvane's experiences of disconnect and alienation

A striking feature of my interactions with the older people is the way they discursively differentiated between those who have and who have not had formal schooling. These differentiations were obvious upon visiting these villages. Those who have been to formal school are referred to as '*Amaqobhoka*' and those who have not been to school are referred to as '*Amaqaba*'. These divisions are obvious to the eye even in the way of life of these two groups. Historically, formal education was introduced by missionaries, and converts were referred to as '*Amaqobhoka*'. This is a derogatory term that has its origins in colonial times – it refers to people's hearts being pierced by missionary ways and ideologies, a process which required them to turn their backs on their previously-held African values, traditions and norms. This is what the formal school system is still perceived to be doing. The connotations of the term '*Amaqaba*', paradoxically, are similarly colonial and negative. The term '*Amaqaba*' refers to people who resisted formal schooling and Christianity. In so doing, they were viewed as backward and inferior to more westernised people in the context of the modernity project which viewed Indigenous ways as not having overcome backwardness and

primitivism. It is interesting to note that the distinction made between ‘*Amaqgobhoka*’ and ‘*Amaqaba*’, a distinction which persists to this day, is not a dualism between more or less preferred ways of engaging with formal education, as there are negatives on both sides. Rather, it is a colonially created binary with terms appropriated by those in power. It is thus important to understand such terms within a particular context to avoid the risk of describing AmaBomvane by what they do not imagine their true selves to be. ‘*Amaqgobhoka*’ may be educated, but they have turned their backs on their Indigenous culture, identities and values. By contrast, ‘*Amaqaba*’ may be true to what is best about their inherited tradition, but they are seen as backward and excluded from mainstream opportunities afforded by the dominating colonial and postcolonial systems. This bifurcation places people in something of a cleft stick as there is no good way to engage with formal education, or to reject it.

Against this complex background, I identified from the narratives three types of divided groups in contemporary Xhora, identified by their engagement with formal education. These are: (i) a group who have not gone through formal schooling; (ii) those who went to school and engaged with the formal system; and (iii) those who began schooling but dropped out or have successfully completed school yet struggle with integration. I shall discuss each of these three typologies in turn.

*Group 1: The contemporary ‘Amaqaba’ (the refusers, unconverted)*

These are people who did not go through formal schooling. They are people who either themselves, or, more commonly, whose parents completely resisted the introduction of formal education. In search of work, many of these people have now migrated to cities to become part of the cheap labour force, commonly doing back-breaking and disabling work. According to my informants, at some time these so called ‘uneducated’ and exploited labourers lose their jobs and return home, with nothing to show for their work but sickness and disability due to the inhumane working conditions. They are reportedly unable to continue supporting their families and do not have skills which can be marketed in the contemporary global economy.

The adverse effects of migrant labour are well recognised (Booth 1996; Mazibuko 2000) and continue to this day. One of my observations accorded with my informants’ claims that to this day many families are left broken, with men from villages leaving their rural areas for migrant labour and women leaving their homes for domestic work. Newly-wedded wives or

other relatives such as grandparents who remain behind are overburdened with multiple responsibilities and a lack of money and support. This in turn may impede children's development and result in their academic motivation and performance being extremely low as they carry a lot of responsibilities at home. These are the realities that continue to blight the lives of Indigenous people. Formal schooling is perceived as not preparing young people with contextually relevant skills to change these realities, but rather perpetuates inequality where the poor remain condemned to society's base, creating a reserve army of cheap and flexible labour.

*Group 2: The contemporary 'Amagqobhoka' (the pierced, converted)*

This group is considered to be alienated from their communities, since after completing schooling, formally educated people also tend to migrate to the cities to take up permanent urban lives, as part of the enormous thrust of urbanisation in contemporary Africa (Mushangayi 2015). These urbanising people are perceived to abandon their communities, depriving them of the skills they have learnt; skills which could otherwise facilitate progress within their communities. Despite the fact that this group joins the emerging Black middle class in South Africa, their existence is referred to by older people in Xhosa as a form of continued slavery. These are people who have been sent to school, often at great sacrifice to their rural families, but if they return, it is said, they have nothing to say to their own people but instead undermine their own people and environments.

Parents of this emerging middle class group face complex challenges. Formal education as offered by government may elevate these children to middle class standing, but at a high price. Parents experience the government as interfering with and undermining the parent-child relationship. They feel left out without any clear understanding of what transpires in the classroom situation or in the world of urban middle class work. They witness their children leaving their villages after schooling, further deepening the plight of the village (Mji 2012). This is an issue not just of physical, financial, and skills abandonment by formally educated children, but it is also a deeply personal and psychological issue, because, it is said, the parents of these children can no longer even see themselves in their own children. This is a profound form of alienation in terms of a disruption of a sense of an ongoing cultural, familial and personal lineage. The alienation is informed by the condition to abandon your own base (Ochola 2007) in order to fit the modern standards and be a contemporary *igqobhoka*. This contributes to a stripped identity and supports the colonial notions of whose

cultures, bodies, languages, and knowledges are considered valuable and desirable and which are disposable.

*Group 3: The 'agonisers' (uncomfortable in-betweeners)*

The older AmaBomvane identified this group as consisting of people who may have dropped out of school as a result of struggling with the formal education system. It also includes those who experience distress as a result of not being able to straddle the two colonially created binaries of '*Amaqaba*' and '*Amagqobhoka*'. School drop-outs are very common in this context (Mji 2012), at least partly because of the very problematic education system and its poor fit with the community. Those who are struggling with integrating the two systems are distressed by the hegemonic pressure to leave behind their true selves (which is predetermined as *ubuqaba*) while also struggling to live a life of being a convert. These conflicts come through the formal education system which presents itself as the only valid form of knowledge.

Various education research studies have also revealed the continuous dissonance between what is taught in formal schools and what learners, particularly those of non-Western backgrounds, experience in their everyday life (Aikenhead 1996; Keane & Malcolm 2003; Keane 2005). The differences not only hinder achievement in formal schooling but also raise questions of relevance, and sustained learner interest in this formalised education (Fensham & Law 2004). Malcom (2007) pointed out that these collisions between the school and home may discomfort and alienate African learners thus causing drop-outs at school. This group of drop-outs is thus portrayed as being confused about their identity and their place in the communities. This group has become unruly, according to the older AmaBomvane. Risky behaviours like alcoholism are common, with much of their days spent in drinking taverns. Fights occur among members of this group, with some stabbings leading to impairments and death.

This group of school drop-outs is also held responsible for preying on older women, robbing and raping them, when under the influence of alcohol. One of older narrators during my community entry kept saying, "it is getting worse from when Mji conducted her study". The children are perceived as completely uprooted from their traditional ways of being and doing. It is here that older AmaBomvane raise concerns about a torn social fabric where there is no sense of caring for one another or sense of responsibility towards one another's growth. In addition, a connection with culture is lost as children are not participating in the key activities

of villages according to age, stage and gender. The perception is that this is a result of introducing an education that has failed to prioritise and centre context-based education, prior to introducing other knowledges. It may also be the case that this group attempts to accommodate the two contradictory systems that do not nurture each other, operating within the superior/inferior logic. It may also be a consequence of the duality (the imposed *Ubuqaba and ubugqobhoka*) which has established itself in AmaBomvane's innermost being, as Freire (2016) notes in his analysis of the suffering of the oppressed. One is the desire to preserve their cultural identity and inclusivity and the other is the influence of the dominant hegemonic source outside their own cultural perspective. The latter is first and foremost mostly coming through the schooling system, and later from the *Amagqobhoka* group and also from the media.

## **2. The implications of this disconnect and alienation on health and well-being**

The above tensions give rise to risky health behaviours resulting from cultural dislocation and are considered culturally inappropriate. The issues that all the elders seem mostly concerned about are the increased alcoholism across generations, the unruly behaviour and violence as well as the reluctance to participate in any culturally appropriate activities that enhance the AmaBomvane way of living. Though Freire (2016) had noted this tragic dilemma of the oppressed as requiring attention from education, these findings reveal an education that is rather worsening this duality thus resulting in this identified agonising state.

Lack of participation in key activities such as food production has opened a gap for other ways of providing food, thus allowing markets to thrive in making a profit out of the poor. The introduction of unhealthy options of foods in supermarkets as a cheaper affordable option following dispossession has given rise to lifestyle diseases in these communities. What is worth noting in this situation is the function of various forms of coloniality in making the colonised missionaries of its work thus causing internal tensions and contradictions between the colonised. The “*converts*” are now seen as having played a significant role in advertising these different forms of foods which were not from the soil of AmaBomvane but from supermarkets. Educators are similarly held responsible. Educators have unintentionally socialised learners to hate home-grown foods and aspire to getting food from the supermarkets as the better option. Biko (1987) explained this as a force that subjects the colonised to a developed state of alienation. Such a state enables the colonised to completely reject their ways while attaching all good that is coming into their communities from

outsiders as good and linked only to whiteness. The educators are performing this state of alienation in everyday classroom activities thus contributing to what Fanon (2008) and Memmi (1990) earlier discussed as the internalisation of the idea that indigenous peoples' ways of being and living are inferior and backward (as linked to the negative connotation of *ubuqaba*). These are the wrong doings of the modern/colonial order and its various forms of coloniality. The irony is that, post this destabilisation, the modern/colonial order later appears as a solution to the problems it caused and we see this in what is now termed organic foods. Equally, these foods are less accessible to the majority poor given the material conditions of the ex-colonised. The modern/colonial order has always committed epistemicides only to later claim originality of non-western worldviews and constitute itself as having a universal non-situated knowledge. This has been very successful in deceiving those who are located on the oppressed side of colonial difference and trapping them into perpetuating their own oppression. This situation does not assist in liberating the dominated indigenous people out of the subaltern position within the hierarchically arranged modern world system.

This situation is important to understand because there is a creation of oppressed subjects who think like the ones in the dominant position and thus participate in the epistemicides. Another example to this is that, what also draws people away from producing and eating the traditional foods from their lands, is that the work needed to produce food is seen as hard labour. Hard labour is regarded as abusive and oppressive by the Western perspective coming through formal school values. This compromises healthy and balanced eating. The irony is that the same hard labour is used to exploit indigenous people through forms of slavery cheap labour. The only difference here is that it now benefits the capitalist who will continue dominating the oppressed economically and otherwise. In addition, schools often use the home activities, like working the soil, as forms of punishment further encouraging learners to undermine and develop a dislike of these activities. These examples demonstrate how schools act as conduit of various forms of coloniality. Yet, the accessible and affordable foods in the supermarkets are usually high in sugar, carbohydrates and fats. The socio-economic circumstances further impede AmaBomvane from accessing healthy foods because of the high costs, thus compromising nutrition. AmaBomvane rightly cite these issues to explain the common chronic diseases of lifestyle within their community. It is here that the meaning of rejection and resistance of Indigenous people ought to be understood from their perspective of being exposed to various forms of coloniality.



Their rejection of the Western knowledge system is not meant to present IKS as superior but to advocate for what decolonial scholars call pluriversalism (Santos 2014; Grosfoguel 2013; Santos, de Sousa, Nunes & Meneses 2007), as a way of building a decolonial curriculum. This response advances the argument that there is more than one way of thinking and conceptualising, hence the need to establish diversity of epistemology and an attitude of tolerance for other knowledges. One critique of Western knowledge is that it is not open to being critiqued by other knowledges as it has ranked itself as absolute. It can thus be concluded that Western knowledge is not always in motion of becoming. As such, it does not enable beings to always be in a motion of becoming. This means identity as praxis for transformation. An absolute knowledge system suppresses the possibility of transformation.

The rejection of the Western knowledge system (as seen in the group labelled as *Amaqaba*) is thus an act of resistance and disruption of these oppressive dominant acts, a needed transformative process which Ramugondo (2015) calls occupational consciousness. AmaBomvane (can) engage, daily, in critical transgressive acts that influence their everyday doing and living (Ramugondo 2015) as part of resisting. Ramugondo contends that everyday doing is the most powerful, yet difficult way through which dominant practices can be resisted. In a way, through these narratives, acknowledging their struggle, AmaBomvane have begun this journey of consciousness and affirmation. Those who rejected formal schooling completely were demonstrating a transgressional act of disrupting oppression.

This education, as expressed strongly by the various participants, produces a colonial hierarchy of power and knowledge, leaving communities with unhealthy binaries – the converted (*Amagqobhoka*) and unconverted (*Amaqaba*), which undermine collective ways of living and a social fabric where everyone cared for one another. This binary has become a source of agonising alienation to children in these communities. When interpreting this struggle using an occupational lens, we begin to understand that this severe alienation does not happen out of a conscious choice, as choice is itself impeded by a sense of alienation. Rather, this alienation stems from a sense of frustration, isolation, powerlessness, loss of control and estrangement from society (Townsend & Wilcock 2004; Wilcock 2006). This is often one outcome of the imposed injustices facing AmaBomvane in a colonial society, tapping into issues of human dignity and self-determination. The same struggle also exposes AmaBomvane to what Wilcock (2006) terms occupational deprivation. This is when opportunities to perform socially, culturally and personally relevant occupations are rendered

difficult and impossible due to external restrictions (Whiteford 2000; Townsend & Wilcock 2004; Wilcock 2006).

These injustices operate at different levels as we see in the case of AmaBomvane. At the individual level, we see children who are engaging in unhealthy occupations like the prevalent alcohol abuse which then translates into increased levels of violence within and between villages. At group levels, older people cite conflict, broken relationships between beings (living and non-living) as well as between all creations. At a community level, we see decreased participation in and marginalisation of communal practices and traditions which give meaning to who AmaBomvane are. Additionally, we see adults from the home and the schooling system, as cited in the findings, equally engaging in drinking alcohol and smoking together with learners. Older AmaBomvane question how young people would be able to reciprocate respect and learn good manners both within the home and at schools when they are sharing bottles of beer or cigarettes in taverns with these adults. As such, schooling and its education has failed to deconstruct these colonial practices but rather acts as a site of reproduction and in some cases systematically worsening the plight of AmaBomvane. This Indigenous group calls for a disruption of such a system if they are to achieve an education that is transformed and which paves ways for reimagining and reclaiming themselves as Indigenous knowers and thinkers.

These divisions are seen as having caused a cultural dislocation and destroyed the social fabric among these communities which have given rise to negative health behaviours and ill health. A disintegration of UbuBomvane means a disruption of a way of life of their choice. A way of life in this context is understood as health and living well. This is because, who people are (being) is linked to how they live and act (do) which is in turn integral to health – as expressed by the occupation-centred understanding of being human (as elaborated on in Chapter 2). This is evident in the saying “*UbuBomvane siyabuphila*” from the narratives. What this means for AmaBomvane is that, any disruption happening in this cultural identity interacts to affect health behaviour in a complex manner. While the common assumption is that behaviour is individually driven by personal immediate control factors, this is not necessarily the case among groups with a history of dispossession, cultural loss and knowledge loss, and marginalisation due to colonisation and apartheid.

AmaBomvane indicate factors beyond their choice and control as influencers of their health and health behaviours. For instance, the role of the formal schooling in the disruption of their

cultural identity appears to promote health risk behaviours. This builds on an earlier study which found that education brought ill health to the communities of AmaBomvane (Mji 2012). In particular, unruly children, alcohol abuse, distress and conflicts associated with daily life, imbalances in participation in key village activities, the unreciprocated or lack of respect between the young and the older have been observed – all of which have been linked with social disruptions and dispossessed contexts. Yet, this association between health behaviours and factors beyond control or choice remains under-researched in health studies in South Africa. This association is also given little attention in the development of contextualised health promotion and disease prevention strategies.

Another example is that of development. It seems as though the ‘myth of development’ (Tucker, 1999) played a role in distorting ways of life as it does not serve the inherent interests of enhancing their lives (living well and healthy) but promotes the growth of a capitalist economy. In his critique of this myth of development, Tucker (1999) notes similar assertions as those of AmaBomvane by problematising the notion of development.

AmaBomvane speak about this term as having distorted and limited their visions and imaginations to aspiring to modern ways as the only ways of surviving and living. They observe the same problem regarding the formal education received by their children. They speak of children who aspire to have money and they too, find themselves needing money in order to survive and live. However, the living well remains severely compromised thus presenting complexities in these communities.

The current study reveals complex relationships which interact with health behaviours between the formal schooling and the AmaBomvane villages. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argued that as soon as African children enter the doors of institutions such as schools, they begin a journey of alienation from their own African contexts and a painful path of learning to hate themselves and their own ancestors as demons. They are taught that all knowledge possessed before entering formal schooling is nothing but folk knowledge, barbarism and superstitions which they must forget. Ngugi (2005) revealed similar findings drawing from the Kenya context concluding together with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) that this is a case where alienated and lost Africans are continuously reproduced and socialised into hating environments that produced them, while liking the Europe and America that rejects them. If this profound problem is not addressed, the formal school curriculum would continue being a source of alienation and dependency, as posited by Emeagwali and Dei (2014). Currently, AmaBomvane further seem to be unable to become themselves both within and outside the

territories of their Indigenous communities. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) calls this being deeply alienated from being themselves.

At the same time, AmaBomvane are unable to adapt because of the current material conditions. The material conditions include the fact that they find themselves living in a foreign land while on their own lands, having no voice over their lives and choices. Those who own the land define realities and ways of being. The issue for AmaBomvane is a combination of lack of access to natural resources in their land in the name of preserving nature as well as being socialised to devalue working the land they have for survival. These are the conditions that not only incapacitate and disempower AmaBomvane from responding and negotiating their space, but also disintegrate their relational way of living and doing. Simply put, this means because their socio-economic standing is of an inferior status as defined by those who own the land, they are unable to adjust to the deviations they see from their children. In a rapidly changing environment, what do they then do? The elders find themselves no longer playing any significant role in the upbringing of their children. The children are no longer society's children as per the Indigenous ways of living. At the same time, they are unable to take their children away from schooling as this sometimes acts as shelter while they are at work for survival under the current conditions.

The complexity becomes being caught between wanting coexistence versus wanting their own safe space that will not encourage deviance among their children. Freire's (2016) noting of a struggle of duality is relevant here again. He states that the oppressed discover that they are struggling to exist authentically, yet fear the desire to exist authentically. They become both themselves and the oppressor they have internalised (Freire 2016). Another complexity is being caught between completely rejecting the schooling system or sending children despite the prospect of alienation. The complexity of spaces like formal schooling where whiteness dominates has been a problem and an unsafe space for AmaBomvane as they struggle and fear to openly become themselves in this white dominated society; the whiteness which imposes assimilation. Fanon (2008) writes that the clashes of the different frames of reference lead to a reality where the customs and sources which we are grounded in become wiped out because they enter into conflict with a "civilisation" we do not know and that was imposed on us. Fanon (2008) also makes us aware that the Black person in such spaces has no ontological resistance and does not know when an inferiority comes into being. Freire (2016) says the oppressed are caught between ejecting (or not) the oppressor within, between having choice or following the prescribed reality, between acting and not. This is because, as

Fanon writes, when Blacks get into contact with whiteness, they cannot be fully Black and not fully white either. This leaves a completely dislocated person who thinks negatively of the self yet is unable to escape this negativity. AmaBomvane appear to be going through the same experience and continue yearning for safe spaces where they can be truly themselves and have autonomy over their ways of living. The question remains, how can they truly be themselves when their “Blackness”, as Fanon writes, functions as a means of setting them apart and ultimately alienates them? AmaBomvane’s children are caught up in a complex situation of how the colonisers define their reality for them and they are forced to fit into modern ways. They have no autonomy left in them to choose the life they want. They are also struggling with a lack of voice and choice to self-construct themselves and what they want without the influence of predetermined constructions of themselves as Indigenous people. These constructions are often only deficit- focused as a result of their indigeneity social status.

Given the longstanding domination over and marginalisation of AIKS by Western knowledge for over four hundred years (Kaya 2013), Indigenous people are within their right to reject such a system. A domination which resulted in a disintegration of Indigenous families, disruption of ways of knowing and living, cultural dislocation, alienation and a loss of confidence and autonomy. Slavery, colonisation and apartheid form part of this unfortunate history of the African continent (Kaya 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) and gave rise to these pathologies which in turn created poor mental health conditions as Fanon (1990) earlier argued. This status quo is equally responsible for a disruption of learning institutions and sources within which IKs were accumulated, reproduced and practised over years. This explains the current complex experience of AmaBomvane.

### **3. A revelation of pressing questions!**

The pressing questions for AmaBomvane remain - What are their children taught and sold short of in formal schooling? How can formal school be less unjust, and how can the negative schooling outcomes as they described be eliminated?

In their vision for what they would like from a formal schooling, AmaBomvane and some of the teachers who are grounded in the culture see a need to link education with cultural sustainability. For example, they would like a situation in which children learn how to produce food sustainably. They would learn this through an education system which would

view the learning of food production as part of learning local cultural norms and values which link human flourishing to an appropriate relationship with the social and natural ecology. They want an education that is reflective of their realities, values, wisdom and expectations, which acknowledges and builds on their knowledges. Additionally, an education that is holistic in the sense that it emphasises the dialogical relationship of people with nature, the home, rivers, gardens and forests as the sites of Indigenous education. An education which acknowledges their land as not just for inhabiting, but that it is to be nurtured, and it is the same land where knowledges are produced and practised.

Amabomvane's aspirations for a sustaining education for Indigenous learners support Django Paris's (2012:93) proposal to transcend what is commonly known as culturally responsive pedagogy to "culturally sustaining practice". In this stance, translation of schooling is not so much focused on having culturally responsive materials to make achievement of Indigenous learners possible, but it positions education as a vehicle for sustaining cultural knowledges that have been a target for extinction. This sustaining education also places emphasis on collaboration with the first educators – the land, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and grandparents using real life examples (Maurial 1999). This is how education would draw from Indigenous philosophies of education that draw on reciprocity and intergenerational relationships. It is here that the land as an educative agent alongside parents and the community who are the first line of educators (Semali 1999) can find its role in formal education. This mode of education has been used to acquire lifelong learning and this is the major goal of Indigenous education – to produce a complete individual, a lifelong learner who is cultured, respectful, integrated, sensitive and responsive to the needs of the family and community (Nikiema 2009; Omolewa 2007).

Culturally responsive and sustaining education has been a concern for Indigenous learners since the emergence of colonial schools. The above typologies (*Amagqobhoka*, *Amaqaba* and *Agonisers- the uncomfortable in-betweeners*) illustrate this far-reaching legacy of colonialism and apartheid in terms of their implications for the way rural people live: from the level of the economy and making livelihoods for themselves and also at the personal level, like their health and/or unhealthy habits. They also illustrate what Du Bois (1903) diagnosed as double consciousness. It is the worst form of alienation among people whose mentalities remain colonised which manifests as an identity crisis. They find themselves identifying with a foreign self (*Igqobhoka*) as a base while running away from their original base (colonially referred as *ubuqaba*). While they are moving from one self to another, this worst form of

alienation kicks in (*Agonisers*). Children start not only hating themselves but also their localities. The consequences are seen in the constructed hierarchy of superiority and inferiority between the formally educated and uneducated people. The formally educated see themselves as superior while seeing their Indigenous ways and those who are still immersed in their Indigenous ways as inferior. This is the colonality of power alluded to by Grosfoguel (2011) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) in chapter 3. Another consequence is the rising levels of physical violence between young people, between villages as well as the young on older people as narrated.

According to AmaBomvane, with the current education system, you may become educated, but the system swallows you, exploits you and further alienates you from your being, thus forcing you to rely on the system to survive. If you resist and choose to not be part of it, suffering continues, as the system excludes you and pressure is felt. The older people are observing their children not able to contribute to local social needs following this education. They raise questions related to what it actually means to be educated in the context of the colonised if it is not for the sake of enhancing life as they are currently witnessing. The school knowledge works in the modern capitalist system while community knowledge is spiritual and grounded in relationships with the place. The current schooling system breaks down these relationships with the place/land to an extent that Indigenous learners, post-schooling, want to remove themselves from these lands, not by choice but through a process of belittling, dehumanisation and misinformation about Indigenous peoples. This confirms assertions made earlier stating the role played by Eurocentric knowledge systems dominating in formal schools and in displacing IKs, languages and cultures, making them invisible (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Battiste 2008).

It is in this process that children are taught to undermine their environments and ways of coming to know in this environment, often causing dissonance for Indigenous learners. Children are thus not prepared for life and service in the villages and rural areas of this country, but to feed the reservoir of slavery and cheap labour in urban areas. When plans of urban life do not thrive, children develop resentment for their villages and themselves, resulting in increased rates of alcoholism as an analgesic for this pain and mental illness. This is to say the rise of engagement of young ones with alcohol cannot be untangled from the history of colonial settlement and multiple traumas resulting from dispossession. These traumas are further perpetuated within the formal education system as they alienate people



from themselves. This is a trend observed among many Indigenous groups as described in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

The violence seen between young people from village to village and between young people and older people as cited in narratives is an act of this trauma, resentment and an outcome of a colonial schooling system. The situation is perceived to be worse for young men as opposed to young women. Men are perceived to have no meaningful role in society, as male role models are missing – absent or killed by the migrant labour system. However, the situation is difficult for women too, as they find themselves carrying double burdens to fill the gap created by absent men. Nonetheless, the broader task is to decolonise the relations between formal schooling and Indigenous communities. A cultural interface is needed between these two learning spaces with emerging Indigenous place-based ways of knowing, doing and being.

Another negative outcome of the school is that of an assimilationist approach which proves to be a form of dehumanisation to Indigenous people. The assimilation nature promoted in the education system makes Indigenous learners desire to become more white. This pressure not only comes from schools, but media further validates these desires as the learners stated in their narratives. Furthermore, this assimilation is further encouraged through the assumptions embedded in the hidden curriculum carried by teachers. As Ladson-Billings (2006) argues, the achievement gap between Indigenous learners and white learners cannot be closed through making Indigenous learners assimilate to whiteness. This desire to assimilate puts Indigenous learners in a state of invisibility, ashamed of their cultures, contexts and knowledges. Assertions from teachers like “you become better off when formally educated” further endorse the weakness and inferiority associated with indigeneity. Such belittling and dehumanisation processes are colonial and serve to remove Indigenous people from their desirable lands. It also perpetuates the notions that they have to lose their indigeneity to be better and live well in society. These impositions are entrenched both in official and hidden curriculum affording normalisation of power differentials in knowledge systems as well as the marginal place of Indigenous people in a racially capitalist society. This is how colonisation of the mind occurs.

Firstly, the identity issues resulting from such a schooling system have led children to drop out of school, adopt risky behaviour such as the cited alcoholism as an analgesic for existential pain, and become unruly in their communities. This is a health hazard which

worries the adults and has been identified as a negative contributor to health. Secondly, these risky behaviours and cultural colonialism break down relationships, peace in the villages, and cultural norms and values which are considered to be influential in maintaining living well in Indigenous communities. As Bredlid (2012) affirms, when the thinking, cultural epistemology and practices of a majority of people are excluded from the curriculum, self-confidence, self-esteem and learning are challenged in school. Moreover, the exclusion not only deprives the children of their own heritages but also fails to raise awareness in new generations of alternative worlds and epistemologies that continue to challenge the hegemonic knowledge production of the West. It also supports the underutilization of Indigenous resources and knowledge in the progress of societies.

For the narrators in this study, what they have in terms of formal education is not education but chains around their children. The older people affirm this view in their sense that their children, though ‘educated’, do not have the knowledges, skills and values related to being a Bomvana. In this sense, education for them has symbolised chains with continued colonial functions despite the fact that South Africa has been a postcolonial democratic country for over twenty years. For this reason, older people interpret this alienation as continued slavery. They ask a simple but profound question: ‘What are the children educated in and for what?’ Children are certainly not being educated for liberation and self-reliance. On the contrary, the education system may rob them of seeing the world from their own viewpoint before integrating other viewpoints. But the only alternative is not to be formally educated which, as I have shown, brings its own difficulties regarding identity and survival in the contemporary world.

In this context, Indigenous people are left in an in-between space, not knowing which is better: being formally educated or uneducated both carry enormous risks and challenges for the local collective, for individuals and families. However, it is clear, as Nyerere (1967) suggested two generations ago, that the purpose of this colonial education was never designed to prepare young people to choose to service their own country, but to inculcate values of a colonial society and to train individuals to service the colonial state. Nyerere’s (1967) cry is echoed in the cries of AmaBomvane. Furthermore, a construction of a hierarchy of superior and inferior subjects continues to prevail in these divisions, as seen in the tensions between the formally educated and uneducated people, with the formally educated seeing themselves as superior while seeing their Indigenous ways and those who are still immersed

in these ways as inferior. All this tension results from a class-creating education system that is alien to people and part of capitalism.

Alienation as a vicious ravage of capitalism plunges Indigenous learners into depression, anxiety, suicide, alcoholism and drugs. This is because, by design and operation, a capitalist education system in an imperialist, neo-colonial, white supremacist state makes life utterly unbearable for Indigenous peoples, whose only claim to life according to racial capital logic is to create wealth for its beneficiaries. This is the mess that Western-modern education system calls a civilisation. The worst situation is all the three groups identified above can see the absurdity of such a system, yet have to live with the reality that their skills help to feed the same people who have made their reality a deeply conflictual one. This is why older AmaBomvane say there is no easy way out of the struggle they find themselves entangled in.

The colonial education system seems to not only fail in liberating people from such complex struggles but also serves to worsen the oppressive status of AmaBomvane's lives. This is because, as confirmed by many IKS scholars, the formal education curricula in Africa remains characterised by the hegemonic dominance of Western knowledge systems as well as an unwillingness to represent and apply local knowledge systems (Gumbo 2016; Higgs 2016; Msila 2016; Shava 2016). This experience is often cited as leading to an educational disconnect, or what Shava (2016:122) calls a "dualistic divide between what Indigenous students learn at school and what they learn in their communities and lived environments". Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali (2011) also confirmed the disjuncture between Indigenous socialisation values and those embedded in formal education. These dominant knowledges shape Indigenous peoples lives by normalising construction of new identities which run contrary to the Indigenous cultures and value system resulting in an alienation of learners from their own socio-cultural origins and no sense of autonomy (King et al. 2009; Siedman 1998). These conflicting identities translate to risky health behaviours that undermine the health status of the communities, that is, the everyday doing and living. This confirms earlier findings from other Indigenous contexts that being isolated from aspects of your identity has negative effects on Indigenous health (King et al. 2009; Nettleton, Napolitano and Stephens 2007). As a result, the question that AmaBomvane further responded to is, what are some of the knowledges that could help in building an ecology of knowledge systems that strengthen their cultural identity and equally contribute to positive health behaviours as part of an indigenised and decolonised practice?

#### **4. Curriculum content: emerging health-related literacies facilitated in the home and/or community**

The advent of the modern state in Africa significantly altered various Indigenous people's ways of knowing, principles and values as evidenced from the AmaBomvane narratives. Similarly, the production of Western education, imposing religions of dominant groups, increasing modernisation of local economies, and the expansion of modern infrastructural and communication facilities all played a role in the complex alteration (Domfeh 2007). In this process of rapid change, this current study's findings confirm that Indigenous people have often endured being regarded paternalistically as primitive beings who are lacking and who will benefit from integration into the dominant modernisation (Ohenjo et al. 2006). The watering down of the effectiveness of African IKs took place as a result. As Chilisa (2012) states, the consequence here is often the continued exclusion of knowledge production from the formerly colonised, historically marginalised and oppressed groups' knowledge system. This comes across in two ways in the AmaBomvane narratives.

Firstly, the watering down highlighted by AmaBomvane as they navigate the rapidly changing world and resist notions that compromise who they are, supports the notion of not affording Indigenous people, particularly those situated in rural areas, the same recognition as urban areas on issues of knowledge production. Rural Indigenous areas have not received equal footing both pre and post-apartheid compared to their urban counterparts. There has been an ongoing ontological and epistemological urban bias and orientation. This comes strongly from the teachers based in these rural areas as well in terms of curriculum issues. They too feel excluded as teachers located in rural contexts when it comes to contributing to the curriculum. This is an injustice that serves to deny rural Indigenous people their place in contributing to knowledge production. What is perpetuated rather, as a legacy of colonialism, is that rural areas are places where people have a hard life with no contribution to make but have problems that only the modernity project can solve. This is where we see knowledge hegemony clearly exposed.

Secondly, this challenge raises the question of whether the conditions which made AmaBomvane live well and effectively in their past experiences are still relevant to manage social changes currently being experienced. Obviously, as the participants' perceptions highlight, some ways may not be of the same significance now as they were in the past given the material conditions they are in. It is thus important to be aware of being essentialist and avoid exaggerated claims of the value of the past. However, documenting these knowledges

remains important to be able to highlight what is still of deep value to Indigenous people as they try to resist hegemony, and reclaim and re-imagine their ways of life. This includes re-imagining what education is for them. Equally important is highlighting what AmaBomvane know about their environment as part of the Indigenous literacy (Semali & Kincheloe 1999) happening within homes which could be taken further in the academy.

*Are people still practising their knowledges? How do they see this knowledge in relation to others?*

AmaBomvane narratives reveal IK as a way of living in nature – a finding that has been previously advanced by IKS scholars (Aikenhead 1996; Aikenhead & Ogawa 2007). This living in nature, for AmaBomvane, comes out strongly from narratives as inclusive of living in plenitude and harmony. It is about a better understanding of yourself when you connect with the environment you are in. It is also about what AmaBomvane know or have known and do in their local villages for survival and living. This is to say, these knowledges which are passed from generation to generation using and preserving their environments are used on a daily basis to maintain their lives. To AmaBomvane, it is clear that their lives embody health and a way of being, with health being about living well within the environment. Therefore, the knowledges and education happening in the homes play a role in assisting people to improve their ways of living. This knowledge is immersed in, and communicated through local culture and languages and in the daily agrarian activities that AmaBomvane engage in.

A striking finding is how the formal schooling system, as a site of imperialism, has succeeded in making Indigenous people lose confidence in their own literacies, languages, cultures and even their struggles of resistance. The following are some of these critical literacies that are considered useful for centring IK in the formal schooling system of children in Bomvanaland. Some of these knowledges are still being facilitated within the homes while others are no longer facilitated as part of the effects of coloniality on AmaBomvane. These literacies not only demonstrate the interconnectedness and holistic nature of health but equally provide support for the positive associations between health, well-being, and the cultures of Indigenous peoples.

#### *4.1 Land as literacy: a health-related knowledge*

From the narratives, AmaBomvane explain the need and significance of reclaiming a deep connection with their land as their primary birth right and as their first educator. This is clear from the narratives in the text; land is the people and people are the land. The Maoris in New Zealand share the same connections with land as asserted by Durie (2004, 2005). Essentially, what is worth noting here as a characteristic shared by many dispossessed Indigenous people is that losing land and its connection means losing their primary reason for existence. It means being isolated from a crucial aspect of one's identity and this is understood as a negative indicator of health (King et al. 2009a; Durie 2005; Durie 2004). This linkage was also noted earlier by Fanon (1968) in his book titled "The wretched of the earth". In this book, Fanon, like AmaBomvane, identified 'land' as first and foremost the most essential value for colonised people through which issues of bread and butter are met and above all, a means to maintain their dignity.

This position on land highlights the value placed on land as custodial and the need to focus on land as a way of enabling people to claim their complete freedom and human dignity. AmaBomvane find shelter for themselves and their livestock in land and understand themselves better when they are linked to this land. An intrinsic value associated with land here is the notion of belonging to an ancestral land. This is clear even in the manner AmaBomvane narrated starting by grounding who they are and their ways of doing and living in which their literacies are embedded. AmaBomvane further emphasise this custodial nature of land, by stating that land is to be taken care of to avoid the creation of environments that are inhumane. Such an understanding of land differs from the modern constructions which view land as property to be sold and alienated. Modern constructions which further create systems that hinder people from living holistically and sustaining themselves through their own land. These constructions further shift people from their own understanding and value of land. This is why the displacement of people and land dispossession is considered to be contributing to the worsening health situation of Indigenous people (Stephens et al. 2006; King et al. 2009b; Gracey & King 2009; Ohenjo et al. 2006). The current study's findings confirm these assertions. This plight has also been common in other contexts such as Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific (Anderson et al. 2006). This is why the fight for land is of significance to Indigenous people. It provides the basis for advocating for a literacy on land and land-based education in order for Indigenous people to re-imagine their true selves.

This reimagining process is equally important for claiming autonomy over their ways of doing and living which their knowledge production is embedded in.

Within the home setting, children are often supported by elders in a process of developing knowledge and a relationship to the land through guided participation or apprenticeship. The purpose of assisting children to learn to live on, and respect the land as part of their daily education is evident in the various activities carried out, teaching the nurturing of land. For instance, learning the names and uses of plants, observing or herding animals, ploughing, collecting vegetables from the fields, and fetching eggs from the chickens, water from the river or firewood from the forests are some of the activities that demonstrate this purpose. This type of learning is not similar to formal schooling's learning which largely relies on second hand experience derived from the teacher, textbooks and teaching aids (Obidi 1995). In contrast, Indigenous learning is practical, the person who is doing the activity learns through doing and explains it with their hands. This is because land-based experiential learning is central in Indigenous education. Simply put, the Indigenous way of life provides opportunities for experiential learning on land. This finding is important for contextualising teaching and learning in Indigenous contexts and provides a methodology on how formal schooling could achieve integration. This type of learning, if integrated successfully within the formal schooling system, can better prepare learners for addressing societal needs both locally and broadly in other contexts.

AmaBomvane also learn about the environment they are embedded in, in terms of how it better supports them to live well. Trees become a resource for making fire for cooking, boiling water etc. The same trees are useful for roofing and fencing. This is how land-based education contributes to sustaining lives. These are the occupational skills that schools could leverage on to coexist with modern ways of roofing and fencing within the context of rural areas. In this way, schools would play a role in equipping people with relevant skills not only essential for the international world and white collar jobs but also the local way of life in a sustainable manner.

Equally important in learning about land is the understanding of different types of trees and plants as sources of food and/or medicines to combat illness. In the olden days, before the introduction of healthcare institutions, Indigenous people believed in the use of plants, herbs and home-grown food as ways of combating illness. Abdullahi (2011) supports this assertion



by stating that traditional medical systems used to be the dominant existing health care systems in Africa prior to the period of colonialism. For instance, Osowole et al. (2005) argue that more than 50 per cent of the traditional healers they studied referred patients at least once to modern health facilities for further treatment. However, modern health facilities do not refer back to the traditional healers nor are they open to any form of integration and collaboration. In addition, it is known from previous studies that approximately 72 per cent of Indigenous Black South Africans still use traditional medicines supplemented by allopathic medicines from chemists and clinics (Mander, Ntuli, Diederichs & Mavundla 2007). These findings also show that people still use their Indigenous knowledges about their environment to support their lives.

This finding is similar to what was found in Zambia with the Chewa people (Banda et al. 2008). Such a finding reveals that, despite the social changes brought about by modernity and its silent constitutive part (coloniality), IKs are still seen as important, of value and still kept in people's memories and wisdom. Mostly among the educated elites, it is colonialism, Western religion and education as well as the globalisation phenomenon that have negatively affected their perceptions of Indigenous medicine (Banda et al. 2008). This is despite findings from various studies in health care-seeking behaviour revealing the increasing realisation that Indigenous practitioners are important players in healing processes especially in low-middle income countries (Hausmann-Muela et al. 2003; Mji 2012; Moshabela et al. 2016). Such evidence shows that Indigenous healers have contributed to promoting positive health behaviours and serve as a good referral point to the modern health care system. Indigenous healers can provide a lead, as Ratzan (2000) notes, in providing important links between disease and behaviour as well as effective treatment not found in Western medicine. It is clear from the above ways of living and related knowledges that an intimate relationship with the environment is crucial for daily survival of AmaBomvane. This is an essential characteristic of IK (Smith 2012; Kincheloe & Semali 1999; Durie 2005).

Land also serves as a natural learning opportunity where mentorship in the form of apprenticeship is essential to teach young people the skills and knowledge for living. Apprenticeship is a form of on-the-job training in which young people learn by doing under supervision (Obidi 1995). Obidi says it is classified as non-formal education as it is established outside the formal hierarchically structured full-time and chronologically-graded system running from primary school to university. A close location of life and work of the person is the main characteristic of apprenticeship whereas schooling tends to withdraw

people out of their normal day-to-day lives and activities, as the older AmaBomvane also emphasise. This system could be made an integral part of the schooling system, built into the different levels of basic education and curriculum in order to keep it alive. Such an integration would balance the theoretical and practical learning, yielding both educational and vocational values. The advantage is that we would have an education system that is designed to be translated into know-how, not a short term achievement based on assimilation. The relationship between in-school and out-of-school learning has been studied, showcasing both strong and weak points (Demmert 2001; Agbo 2001). What is shown as a positive is that, if bridges are built between these systems, the two forms of education (schooling and apprenticeship) have the potential to complement each other. In fact, establishing a strong link between school and skill acquisition could potentially enhance academic standards and the quality of the labour force produced by learning institutions (Obidi 1995; Demmert 2001; Agbo 2001).

#### *4.2 Food production and security as literacy*

Continuing with the land value, the AmaBomvane narratives also present their connection with the land as aligned to the purpose of sustaining their livelihoods. One central indicator for sustained livelihoods is food security for AmaBomvane. This is important considering the present lifestyle diseases blighting the vulnerable Indigenous people (Scott et al. 2017). The loss of access to land and other natural resources (such as forests) as demonstrated in the narratives, in the name of preserving nature, has systematically made it difficult for AmaBomvane to sustain their traditional livelihoods according to their choices of food production. These findings are common in other Indigenous context as documented by King et al. (2009), Gracey & King (2009) and Ohenjo et al. (2006) and portray scenarios of colonial imposition and outcomes. The irony about barring Indigenous people from their natural resources such as forests citing environmental concern which happened since the late 1800s and early 1900s in the Transkei is that the levels of deforestation severely increased once colonialists took over (Tropp 2006). This colonial impact and its legacy has continued to negatively influence AmaBomvane's ways of doing and living, thus undermining their health status.

The lack of land-based education is colonial in the sense that it stems from and supports the alienation of people from their lands thus influencing the daily doing and living. As argued in

Chapter 2 using the case example of obesity (Scott et al. 2017), the unresolved land question also remains linked to the diet-related lifestyle diseases that compromise Indigenous well-being. Having education that perpetuates connection deficits with land for better livelihoods and health instead of enabling reconstruction of the disrupted connection contributes to alienating and disintegrating people from their lands. Such connectivity deficits give rise to ill health in Indigenous communities in various forms as revealed by the narratives. One form is the destruction of a way of living which is linked to the Bomvane identity. During this alienation process, the colonial capitalist system introduces systems that allow only the beneficiaries of the system to possess, retain control of and commodify land and access to forests and seas as resources for living. These systems include, but are not limited to environmental concerns, preservation of nature etc. This Western concept of control negatively influences and forcefully shifts AmaBomvane's lifestyles. It simultaneously creates an attitude of hating this way of life though regarding it as backward, hard and oppressive. These processes can be traced back to the legacy of colonialism as Ohenjo et al. (2006) argued when analysing health of Indigenous people in Africa.

The second form of destruction of AmaBomvane ways of surviving through their own produced foods is done through creating a desire for other ways of life that are painted as easier and attractive in the name of civilisation and development. This comes in the form of being consumers and labourers in the racial capitalist system. The assumptions in the created desire include a lie of living well and better. AmaBomvane children thus enter a journey of hating their ways of life and perceiving them as backward. The same attitude is created around home herbs. AmaBomvane elders cite how their children start refusing to participate in agricultural activities that sustain the home. As a result, older AmaBomvane state that there are no longer home-produced foods. When produced, it is only the adults participating in such activities. It is thus reductionist to attribute these situations to limited education on healthy eating as stipulated under social determinants for diet-related lifestyle diseases in the South Africa health review article by Scott et al. (2017).

What then happens when AmaBomvane no longer produce and consume their own foods and herbs? New diseases enter the communities through processed foods or foods containing genetically modified organisms (GMO) they access from supermarkets as Scott et al. (2017) correctly outline. The contributory factors of these changing lifestyles, what and how people eat resulting in increased non-communicable diseases (including the chronic diseases of lifestyle) are a result of viewing land as a commodity to be sold and owned. The choices

people make to eat dangerous high sugar / high fat /acidic / processed / GMO foods from the supermarket stems from colonial capturing of land as detailed in Chapter 2. These difficult positions have lead AmaBomvane to depend only on money-related ways of living. To honour this living, they also have had to endure back-breaking work and serve as labourers producing capital for those who own land while AmaBomvane walk away with low wages insufficient to provide healthy foods for their families. Low wages that can only enable them to buy cheap processed foods. It is thus clear that unhealthy eating habits should never be merely attributed to illiteracy issues.

The narratives prove how nutritious and healthy the foods they used to produce before the colonial interactions were. AmaBomvane may not hold formal education qualifications but they know how to lead healthy lifestyles. Their eating habits and behaviours are significantly influenced by the dominant colonial relations. It is for these reasons that I think merely targeting healthy eating top-down school programmes as interventions whereby school nurses convey knowledge on healthy eating is not sufficient to bring significant change towards lifestyle diseases. The colonial systems that change people's material conditions thus pushing them into compromising lifestyles ought to be deconstructed both by education and health systems. It is here that the findings reveal colonialism as a broad social determinant of health that should be recognised by education and more so the health systems. Colonialism is currently not explicitly mentioned in the major determinants for diet-related non-communicable diseases cited in the 2017 South African Health Review (Scott et al. 2017), despite the fact that the burden of disease is not improving. Again, this shows the tendency of life-servicing systems to only scratch the surface of health issues without any commitment to change the structural and systemic factors that continue to undermine the most vulnerable groups such as Indigenous people. The persistent health inequities are thus not surprising.

Using the occupation-based lens, Galvaan (2012; 2015) unpacks the concept of occupational choice as surpassing conscious act to do and not to do as part of asserting one's agency. This is important to understand in the context of AmaBomvane as Galvaan further posits, occupational choice is a dynamic transactional act negotiated between people and context, where agents and structures shape and reshape each other. It is this interaction between agents and structures upon which social action of AmaBomvane is dependent. Working the land or not, for AmaBomvane remains intersecting and reshaped by the socialisation akin to colonisation in the context of capitalism. The participants shed light on some of the

complexities they are faced with as influencing their engagement with land for food security and maintaining livelihoods.

I will again demonstrate how AmaBomvane have been complexly influenced by the unjust, imposed modern ways of doing and living. The literacies of AmaBomvane about their soil are central to food security-related activities and livestock handling skills such as milking and slaughtering cattle. These are still practised in some villages by those who still own cattle. AmaBomvane struggle to access forests for firewood which are helpful in preparing home produced food and wood hedges which are critical for building roofs, food storage cabins and fences for cattle and fields to prevent cattle from eating crops. In addition, AmaBomvane find themselves in trouble with the law when seen fishing by the sea. They also get arrested for digging sand which they use for brickmaking and building their houses. The formal schooling's hidden school curriculum also discourages this way of life labelling it as distracting children from school work. Additionally, due to land dispossession, the environmental equilibrium between humans and animals has been significantly impacted, resulting in the proliferation of pests. There is also a perception that these changes have also introduced new illnesses which natural herbs from AmaBomvane's soil are unable to cure. Are the school programmes focusing on healthy eating taking into consideration these structural issues? This remains an unanswered question.

The other issue is related to the increased migration of the middle generation to the cities. This movement has meant that elders who often play the role of educating children about land and food production have to neglect such significant roles to fill the middle generation gap thus switching to looking after grandchildren. Such shifts affect the Indigenous education between the generations, despite the fact that many young ones are seen as uninterested. These struggles continue to intersect and blight AmaBomvane's aspirations for households that do not experience hunger.

Over the years, AmaBomvane achieved their ways of life by observing and orally recording how their environment works, as stated in the narratives – that is, understanding their land (soil), weather conditions and when to plough or not, animal life including dealing with pests, plants and trees, including those that are used as medicines. They understood the importance of learning how to produce and prepare traditional foods using traditional methods and natural resources. These communities are agricultural in nature with maize being the main source of their various nutritious foods. Subsistence farming has been a dominant method of

food security in the area affording generations with knowledge and skills of ploughing, harvesting, preservation and storage. Their Indigenous ways of preserving and storing have kept them going throughout the years and across generations. This knowledge is significant for survival during seasonal droughts and winter months when they are not able to continue ploughing. The storing has also played a significant role during breakaway periods. These are periods in between planting seasons where the soil is not touched to allow it to breathe and rest in preparation for the next cycle. This is part of soil enrichment. During this time, Cow dung which is collected from the kraal would be used to further enrich the soil. Rich soil enables them to produce more food which they store to further sustain their families.

#### *4.3 The system of kith and kinship as literacy*

Identity is not limited to genetics. Indigenously, it is affirmed upon ancestry and social relationships. AmaBomvane also bring forth the value of knowing and being part of the community. This further highlights the importance of perception about self. Their communities are constructed within strong family and kinship ties. Their practices, responsibilities and everyday doings serve to reinforce these ties and a sense of belonging. Their kinship system not only demonstrates the relationship between generations across space and time, but equally resists the reductionist limiting colonial notions of family connections to only immediate family. Clan lineage is a way AmaBomvane have come to know and understand themselves in relation to other beings and all creation. It is similarly one way of maintaining links between the living and the non-living. As such, they call themselves:

*“ooTshezi, ooTenza, ooFakade, uSaliwa, uJalamba, uSkhabela, uCetshane, Mqal’ongangenduku, Njilo-njilo kuya ngaselwandle, uNdela, uNeneza, iNkonjane emnyama ebhab’ emafini, iinzwana zakwaBomvana, iinto ezinomkhitha kodwa zimithond’wemide, iNyoka emnyama ecanda isiziba, uMkhonto, uMalala nentombi ivuke ithi bhuti ndizeke noba kungeshumi leesheleni, inkosi ezingazange zibutheng’ubokhosi. Zinto ezityafileyo ingathi zidla umcuku”.*

This lineage is foundational to obtaining a level of critical consciousness about who they are yet it remains silenced in the formal school system, thus missing out on grounding children on their base from early ages – a base that does not separate the living from the non-living, maintaining relationships with ancestral life. These teachings happen in the homes during rituals with different generations where children also learn how to tell these stories to the next

generations. Ngoetjana (2007) references how the notion of family, in African societies, transcended the reduced social anthropological understanding of family. This reduced understanding popularised the notion of family as consisting of only extended family and polygamy. However, in African societies, the understanding that worked prior to the emergence of the city states of Kimberley (Diamond) and Johannesburg (Gold) was that the entire community served as family. This is how beings related to one another as the older people narrate. The AmaBomvane narratives further highlight that the schooling system is also playing a role in watering down this broader understanding of family in its teachings. There seems to be a noted downplay of the African family which consists of the entire village or community. This downplay has diminished the efficacy of the entire community as a caring community (Ngoetjana 2007) with communal responsibilities in the upbringing of children. This is clear in the popular proverb ‘it takes a village to raise a child’.

It is also worth noting that colonialism and its forms of oppression did not only target natural resources in African communities but also disrupted cultural lineages, values and identities which were ensured in specific structures. Colonialism fractured these structures some of which were about the collective upbringing of children. In these structures, every elder in the community was a parent and every member of the community was responsible for one another’s growth. The imposed systems of the coloniser, as perceived by AmaBomvane, meant that a child is free to be who they want to be. This system resulted into conflicts where parents feel that their children were taken away from them thus breaking the child-parent relationship. Children, spending the whole day at school were taught this new culture of relating with parents which was often clashing with the home culture that emphasised that a parent knows better. In the quest for these systems to coexist and clashing at the same time, negative psychological effects result, leading to risky health behaviours as mentioned in the first section of this chapter.

Older AmaBomvane also blame the introduction of human rights as having worsened this breakdown of relations in their Indigenous communities. This seems to have resulted in various complicated relations. First, at an individual level, what has resulted is children who have lost value and confidence in who they are, their cultures, histories and languages. Secondly, at a societal level, children have lost respect not only for their biological parents but broadly all adults in the community. Ideally, everyone who is the same age as your parents, uncles, aunts, sisters and brothers is your senior. However, this does not seem to be the case anymore in villages of Xhora. Adults in the community are no longer able to



discipline children both in the household and broadly in the community. This is not because they do not want to but that the children threaten to get them arrested and even physically violate them as they resist to be disciplined. What transpires is that, the experiences of many older people is that young people even reject the notion that all adults are parents. The broken relationships have led to a breakdown in the intergenerational relations. There is now a gap in disciplining and instilling respect or guiding children in the norms and values of respect and discipline. As a result, teachers are of the perception that parents are no longer disciplining their children resulting in undisciplined children in the schooling environment. On the other hand, the parents are blaming the schooling system for having instilled a sense of undermining adults and values taught within the home. This situation does not help these systems work together, but rather worsens the lack of nurturing and resulting tensions. The question that remains in these communities is, who is playing the role of instilling discipline in children?

It is clear that the instability in relations has had severe implications for the socialisation of children. As Ngoetjana (2007) states, the broader understanding of the African family has been the foundational basis for African children. The roles facilitated by an African family include helping children cope, preparing children for adult life and teaching children societal expectations and ways of behaving, among other things. This is the biggest part of socialisation. In the context where this socialisation is downplayed and undermined, instability and disintegration exists. Are the existing tensions, conflicts and violence cited in the narratives between the generations therefore surprising? These not only undermine the social, emotional and spiritual health status of the villages but also mirror a social order that is itself dehumanising, violent and destroying peace and harmony in Indigenous communities.

#### *4.4 Engagement in traditions and rituals as literacy*

Linked to kinship as discussed above, traditions and rituals as literacy are important aspects of cultural expression and representation of values in these Indigenous communities. The older people as well as the traditional leadership also facilitate knowledge on specific traditions, rituals and customs that are to be done in the different stages of life for all children. These ceremonies are believed to be significant for the well-being of AmaBomvane. For instance, rituals like *Ukuqatywa* for small children and *Intonjane* as the child enters adulthood stage are a necessity. If these rituals are not done, it is believed that a child will get sick or will show some inappropriate behaviour which would be an indication that a specific

ritual has not been done. This differs for boys because *Uhwahuko* for them, though it is an important stage for every young man, does not make one sick when it is not done. This is what differentiates tradition from a ritual. There are also traditions that are more communal like ceremonies meant to address broader issues like drought. These activities and embodied knowledges are key for the survival of the community. Celebrations like *Imitshotsho* and *Intlombe* were also significant spaces for the health of the people as they believed in singing and dancing as healing.

The AmaBomvane grooming is about moulding individuals into well-behaved pupils who are proud of their identity. Children are brought up being taught how to behave, how to handle themselves and others. For example, young boys are taught how to relate to young women with emphasis on not laying a hand on a woman. Likewise, young girls are taught how to relate to young boys. The same applies to relating to older people beyond biological parents but all older people in the community at large. In times of conflicts and quarrels, it is believed that being involved in specific activities assists with cooling off one's anger. For instance, taking a walk to the river to fetch water or herding cattle among other activities are believed to assist one to 'cool off'. These are strategies for anger management aimed at maintaining peace in the villages. Concepts of respect, discipline and caring featured strongly in their education. Here we see an investment on the emotional and mental health of the people. Though AmaBomvane believe in peaceful villages as indicators of a positive health status (Mji, 2012), nowadays, there seems to no longer be peace in these villages. The structures of discipline and behaviour management have been disrupted.

#### *4.5 Relationship building as literacy*

The use of daily activities for learning give relationship building its importance. Relationships are firstly key to daily doing and living of AmaBomvane. Secondly, they are key to fostering intergenerational learning. Through one-to-one activities with older relatives who come to know the child's spirit, children learn their individual identity. The traditional name ultimately chosen and conferred in family/communal ceremonies such as *ukuqaba* signifies that spirit of the child. This is perceived as strengthening relations with ancestors and collective existence. One of the older participants complained that this generation wants to name their own children, thus running the risk of not following this spiritual system attached to naming. A spiritual system that contributes to building an identity. From an early age and stage, such identity building and learning moulds Indigenous learners in a manner that would not negatively impact on their identity, thus avoiding going through an identity

crisis at a later stage. This is why older people support the early identity development of their children as a good support system for children as they re-imagine their continuous state of becoming.

Agbo (2001) emphasised that socialisation and education which is focused on intergenerational continuity has the potential to boost learners' self-esteem and self-confidence, therefore potentially raising their academic performance. For example, a synthesis of several studies reviewed by Demmert (2001:9) reveals evidence that student identification with “Aboriginal language and cultural programs are associated with improved academic performance, decreased dropout rates, improved school attendance rates, decreased clinical symptoms, and improved personal behaviour of children”. It can thus be argued that the power of developing positive cultural identities in the early years goes far in helping children adjust to school life.

#### *4.6 Nurturing the child's spirit as literacy*

The emphasis on a relationship with ancestors as part of the AmaBomvane ancestral way of life and practices assists their children in developing a sense of one's spirit as well as a stable relationship with one's ancestors and the creator. This strong sense of a spiritual identity assists one to weather social difficulties in everyday doing and living. AmaBomvane are taught how to serve others and the community, being respectful to the young and the old and the notion of sharing as values modelled by parents as a way of leading a good life. This kind of learning not only builds social responsibility as a goal of AmaBomvane's education (Serpell 2011), but also opens up opportunities for human relations as well as resources for learning that are intergenerational and collective. For Indigenous children, the experiences described above develop their cultural identity, and social and spiritual well-being, often yielding cognitive strengths that are not always recognised by non-Indigenous educators and the formal education. This nurturing of a learner's spirit and the learning spirit could be one way of revitalising AmaBomvane's subjugated knowledges. This revitalising will enable learners to be actively engaged in the reconstruction of the own identities and histories as part of a curriculum that is informed by critical pedagogy.

Since birth, AmaBomvane are immersed in a cultural setting in which the authority of elders and emphasis on practical knowledge are valued. Yet, they go through an education system where classroom lessons are not made to everyday life in these communities. Additionally, this authority of elders is devalued and undermined in this formal system. These are two

separate realities. Values such as *ukuhlonipha*, which embraces the respect of the young towards the old and vice versa get lost in these separate, clashing realities. The reciprocated respect, when enacted, is said to contribute to peaceful villages both within the homes and villages thus leading to living well and doing. It is not clear how customs such as *ukuhlonipha* and the economical processes of the AmaBomvane have been embedded within the knowledge production of the formal education system. As argued earlier, both the homes/villages and the formal schools seem to not be playing any form of role in instilling this reciprocated respect in practice. The schools blame the parents for not disciplining their children while the parents blame the schools for having interfered with the parent-child relationship leaving parents with no authority over their children.

## **5. Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning that could inform curriculum policy and practice**

Part of reimagining requires a devotion to building theoretical constructs of African Indigenous education that will meet both local and global demands. Often, Indigenous education and knowledge is located within the dominant paradigms of Western thinking and measured by these standards. AmaBomvane's narratives are key for understanding and disentangling Indigenous ways of knowing from this dominance of Western thinking. I shall now discuss processes of knowledge production, values and pedagogies as embedded in a socially, culturally, politically and historically defined context.

Firstly, as evidenced from the narratives, AmaBomvane's Indigenous concept and value of education centres contextually relevant participation as an integral construct of living well. Based on the etymology or origins, of the term "participation", "it originates from Latin-derived words: *particeps*, meaning part-taking, and *pars* + *capere*, meaning to take or to share in. Common English definitions include, to take part in or become involved in an activity; the state of sharing in common with others, and the act or state of receiving or having part of something" (Simpson & Weiner 2002 cited in Law 2002: 640-641). Law further opines that the being involved and sharing, particularly in an activity are thus integral to the notion of participation. Significant to note from these definitions is the focus on both the nature and extent of involvement, with qualitative and quantitative implications (Law 2002). The World Health Organisation defined participation as involvement in a life situation categorised into domains of learning and applying knowledge, general tasks and demands, communication,

mobility, self-care, domestic life, relationships, work or schooling and community, social and civic life (WHO 2001).

Within the context of AmaBomvane, this participation includes (but is not limited to) children learning to engage and perform daily key activities such as herding livestock, preparing food, cleaning households, fetching water and wood, working the fields to prepare for planting or harvesting, making weaved mats and brooms, cutting hedgerows to build and fence kraals, making yokes for ploughing, cultivating, harvesting and pruning, plastering house walls with mud, collecting cow dung to plaster floors in the rondavels, peeling corn off the cob or mowing and many more. In these activities one can see the richness of geometry, mastery of mathematical calculation embedded in cultural practices, and geographical and spiritual elements. What is worth noting is how these skills and activities are centred on the home and its ways of doing and living. These key activities and knowledges sustain the homes of AmaBomvane and their living well. I thus note the concept of participation as a key knowledge creation construct within these Indigenous villages. It also locates Indigenous epistemology as having health and social elements (Hamminga 2005) in the following ways:

- One knows participation through social context (Ndubuisi 2013)
- The knower thinks in, for and through his or her society (Ruch 1984)
- For the knower to attain knowledge sufficiently, they cannot do it alone but in a social context (Ajei 2007), and through a dynamic connection that arises from people within the social and physical environment, generations with each other and people with the environment (Durie 2004).

In this situated logic, traditions, rituals, ancestors and heritage celebrations are institutions through which knowledge comes as a given, as Ndubuisi (2013) affirms, the acquisition of knowledge becomes a “we” enterprise (Hamminga 2005). Contrary to these Indigenous ways of knowing, Western knowledge is predominantly an individual quest. As Itibari (2006), Semali and Kincheloe (1999) and Durie (2005) posit, IK is not derived from individuals alone but involves collective understandings and rationalisations of the community. This collective nature emphasises the togetherness and dialectics involved in knowledge production and acquisition. What does this mean to Indigenous people? It means that the efforts and participation of individuals in society contribute to the production of knowledge in its social dimension (Ndubuisi, 2013; Sillitoe *et al.*, 2005). It is through this participation

that the learners acquire important skills, knowledges, connect with peers, the older generation and community, becoming transforming beings as well as finding meaning and purpose of life. This is the social and cultural influence that is missing within formal education. This is because the education system does not allow learners to bring knowledge from their lived experience (Shava 2000; Shava 2016). This is a colonising process in which learners are forced to participate in a collective but sub-conscious process of subjugating and considering their ways of life and knowing as inferior, valueless and insignificant (Odora-Hoppers 2001; Shava 2016).

The consequence of colonisation on AmaBomvane is also seen in how their ways of learning were altered through the destruction of their learning structures resulting in forced assimilation, cultural domination and a conforming attitude. As an example, the first issue pertains to the elders' authoritarian approach in guiding children, which could possibly influence children's sense of agency negatively. When older women fault the school for giving children too much information to an extent that they know too much, the concern seems to not only be limited to how too much information leads children to other risky behaviours. The concern is also related to the adults claiming their space as holders of this home knowledge. My concern in this process of claiming is the risk of seeing children as less knowers and thinkers with a sense of self-determination. Older AmaBomvane seem to be fighting for their place but this comes across in a very authoritarian way. They run the risk of appearing as the only ones with authority to decide what and how much children engage with in their everyday doings and living. It may have worked well in ancient times, however, it may limit children's space as knowers and thinkers too given the current material conditions of Indigenous young people. It rather normalises, among children, an attitude of passivity where they must always wait for an elder in their everyday doings and living. There is no grooming a sense of initiative and exploration in order for children to figure out daily doings, with support that is not authoritarian but facilitating.

In these situations, it may be the case that choice is also controlled as in the case of colonial education. It is a form of submissiveness to the elder type of an approach which the middle generation is seen to be escaping by living separately from the elders. An interesting question to ponder would be to ask how this may implicate border thinking as advocated for by the decolonial scholars. It may be the case that, when these experiences of limitations and controls in their thinking and doing within home settings intersect with those of the formal

schooling system which is violent towards Indigenous learners' thinking and knowing - creativity, confidence, independent thinking and potential of learners is further suppressed. It may worsen feelings of inferiority as planted by the colonial education. The suppression of initiative-taking and questioning may keep Indigenous learners at more of a disadvantage, always taking a position of a passive bystander in their learning instead of proactivity. However, as stated, it is important to note that this behaviour of elders is not happening in isolation and is not a true reflection of Indigenous education modes of learning. This authoritarian behaviour is influenced by their own struggles for existence in a hegemonic knowledge system that thrives on extractivism. Extractivism is a struggle faced by many Indigenous peoples as their knowledges are stolen and the privileged colonisers claim ownership. Secondly, they are subjected to their erasure as knowers and thinkers and are labelled as illiterate on the basis of not having formal schooling qualifications. As individuals, those who claim original ownership of the extracted Indigenous peoples' knowledges, with no acknowledgement of its indigenous origin and identity, use the oppression, injustice and pain of Indigenous people for their own individualised intellectual growth.

The subjugation of learners' knowledges as influenced by a socio-cultural environment acts as a further barrier to participation in learning. It also fails to build on existing collective and intergenerational resources which matter in learning. It is as if the languages, literacies and community knowledges have no relevance. This is a deeply problematic approach as it assumes that one-size-fits-all with no consideration of a diversity of learners and world senses. Such a view has continued to privilege certain knowledges and practices while perpetuating a deficit construction of the subjugated knowledges like the IKs. It may therefore be the case that enabling ecologies of knowledges that make classrooms sites of competing ideas (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) may address this educational dissonance.

Co-creation of knowledges would assist Western knowledge in addressing this denial of societal influence in knowledge production and interpretation. It is here that I see decoloniality thinking in Indigenous thinking and practice. Though AmaBomvane express their struggle of being embedded within the colonial matrix of power, their thinking also shows the possibility of what the Latin American theorist Mignolo (2009, 2011) terms border thinking, as grounded in the rejection of modernist methodologies that are based on the premise that it is impossible to think beyond the terms of coloniality. Obviously, this requires



what Mignolo also identifies as epistemic disobedience and delinking from the modern humanity ideals, economic growth promises and financial prosperity at the expense of human life. AmaBomvane could benefit from showing solidarity and thus collectively delinking as their knowledge is already situated within these practices. This is about rejecting the assumption that the knowing subject in the discipline is objective, transparent, detached from what they know and untouchable by the geo-political arrangement of the world in which race is used to rank and configure people and regions (Mignolo 2009, 2011). From this neutral standpoint, the privileged knower gets to project what is good for the marginalised from their privileged standpoint. The formal schooling system is in an influential position to assist AmaBomvane here by opening up spaces for IK to explore its possibilities in paving the way for sustaining education and reclaiming Indigenous identities. This would not be to valorise IKs as I argue later in this chapter, but to recover the value of IK and assist in the reimagining of an Indigenous identity process.

This substantial body of IK is also transmitted via memory orally from generation to generation and is sustained through various institutions and structures, rituals and celebrations. The knowledge in these institutions include learning about land, plants, trees, bringing up children to adulthood, how to secure food (agriculture) as already mentioned in the above sections. This implies that the knowledge produced by Indigenous people is embedded in their culture and embodied in their practices. From the AmaBomvane narratives, specific rituals and traditions as institutions where learning usually happens within these villages were identified. For example, Ulwaluko (the rite of passage for boys to manhood) and Ukuthonjiswa (the rite of passage for both girls to womanhood), Imitshotsho and Iintlombe (dance and song gatherings) featured prominently with participants being concerned that some of these institutions are no longer happening. For those still happening, the concern is that their structure has changed due to various factors beyond their control such as the modern constructions of space and time.

Major education takes place through interaction with others in these diverse structural spaces. At the core of these institutions, learning is life oriented. Again, we see participation as a key construct for the learning. The learners not only participate in these institutions as part of the rituals of the villages to gain knowledge and skills, but to additionally learn about the significance of such institutions and the related processes of when, where and how to perform them so that they can also pass these to the next generation. This is an example of a learning resource for Indigenous communities that is intergenerational. We see opportunities for

intergenerational dialogues which is a key social element of IK. The knowing is derived from this chain of relationships between generations, thus linking knowledge with wisdom<sup>17</sup> of life which is achieved in a multidimensional approach (Semali and Kincheloe 1999; Ndubuisi 2013). Given the holistic and complex nature of IK, ancestors<sup>18</sup> and elders are deemed custodians of knowledge. It is worth noting that this does not imply that young people are unknowers but rather emphasises the link between wisdom and knowledge. The accordance of custodianship to elders merely signifies that young people cannot fully understand the interaction and cohesion of things given their limited life experience. Young people still require guidance from elders to navigate life while also preparing them for the same role at a later stage in their lives.

Essentially, this facilitated education brings to the fore the needs of both the learners (young people raised in these households) and their respective communities. This is meant to make their education more relevant and sustaining, comprising realities and occupational skills of a given people in relation to their day-to-day life (Smith, 1934; Odora, 1994). This becomes helpful to Indigenous learners partaking in this education because its aim is to facilitate self-reliance<sup>19</sup> as the learners learn basic life requirements, being prepared for a sustainable life when their parents pass on to the afterlife. The expressed principle that “*parents would have failed if they did not prepare their children to be able to live by themselves when they die*” seemed to be a common saying across the sampled young people and this I also witnessed as I was growing up. It speaks to the element that education ought to be sustaining and teach learners how to live well now and in future. The learners who participated in this study further expressed how this view influenced and encouraged them to listen, obey and learn from their grandparents. These influences place a particular responsibility on young people following the belief that developing a child through education of their choice is developing the entire village. What is revealed here is what Serpell (2011) terms social responsibility as a goal of education. With this goal in mind, children are Indigenously raised to believe that, in due course, they will play an important role in the development of their communities (Mji 2012; Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali 2011). Duncan & McMillan (2006) earlier shared this same view. A distinction is revealed as the emphasis put by Western education is merely

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<sup>17</sup> For Africans, “Wisdom is a practical and experiential capacity that gives consideration to age. Holistic knowledge is accorded to some elders as they have gone through different stages of life and experienced it at a broader scale than young people” (Ndubuisi 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Ancestors bestow a knowledge link between the non-living and the living.

<sup>19</sup> A concept coined by Nyerere in 1967 in his paper on ‘education for self-reliance’.

on short term “individual success in a broader consumer culture” (Mubangizi & Kaya 2015:128) instead of facilitating learners’s ability to survive and be contributing members to society (Simon 2008; Serpell 2011; Mubangizi & Kaya 2015).

Walter (2002) and Kaya (2013) link the education narrated by AmaBomvane to the original Western meaning of ‘education’<sup>20</sup> which also understood African concept before Africa was distorted by Eurocentrism. The current Western limitations are a result of this Eurocentric distortion which created and propagated the belief that ‘education’ means formal Western formal systems of schooling introduced to Africa by colonialism (Walter 2002; Kaya 2013). Consequently, popularising the belief that what is known as formal education today is seen as superior to any other forms of education such as the Indigenous education happening in the homes and lands of AmaBomvane. The same applies to Indigenous educators (parents) who are seen as inferior because they are mostly not holding any form of formal education qualifications. These asymmetrical historical power relations maintain the position of formalised knowledge systems as dominant over others and of a universal status.

The other value coming through in the narratives is that of moulding the identity of learners through Indigenous education. Following formal schooling, AmaBomvane sages witness their children beginning to value more the formal schooling system and its ways while undermining, and disregarding their socio-cultural identity. Kanu (2008) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) remind us of the success of the imposed formal curriculum of the coloniser in muting critical thinking of the Indigenous person in its quest to re-mould what was seen as the ‘uncivilised native’ in order to resemble (but not close enough) the coloniser. School curriculum continues to be a vehicle used to eradicate the Indigenous identity and alienate Indigenous learners, as Fanon (2008) also asserts in the Black skin white mask. Eradicating the identity has been the weapon to achieve the subjugation, dehumanisation and destabilisation of an Indigenous identity. AmaBomvane narratives from young people validated this view by expressing the pressure they often bear within their schooling environments. They then begin a journey cited by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) of aspiring to urban life while developing a growing hatred towards their rural Indigenous backgrounds and identities. This is not to imply that one should not aspire to other ways of knowing but this

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<sup>20</sup>According to Mmola (2010), “the original meaning of the Western conceptualization of education shows something quite different from the colonial view. The word ‘education’ was derived from two Latin words: educare (to rear or foster) and educere (to draw out or develop). Thus education according to this original conceptualization incorporates all the processes of raising up young people to adulthood, and developing their potential to contribute to society”.

should not happen at the expense of destroying the other identity, with the understanding that we all carry multiple identities which position us differently. Destroying Indigenous identities would perpetuate the modern hegemonic construction that African communities had no civilisation before colonisation.

Colonialism and globalisation have the same impact on Indigenous people - these fears expressed by AmaBomvane support what earlier scholars argued (Mazrui 2001; Moahi 2007; Odora 2002). Just as many colonized people were displaced from their cultural lands and their rich cultures adversely diluted and plundered by colonialism, globalisation is doing the same to IKS in subtle ways. Globalisation builds a global pool of knowledge that is on an uneven ground. The more powerful countries in the North gain more than those from the South in this globalisation. Two issues arise in this regard in terms of threats faced by IKS. One is raised by Odora-Hoppers (2002) who states that globalisation “has put fishes and sharks in the same pond” with the aim to dilute or even kill IKS and its characterisations. This is called cultural globalisation. The second issue was raised by Nyamnjoh et al. (2007) who locates commercialization of IKS as the real threat. These authors argue that globalisation has privatised and commoditized knowledge, resulting in an economy of knowledge. This implies that Knowledge that has always been accessible in the public domain, communally owned and passed down from generation to generation, has been privatised through notions of intellectual property rights that confer rights on individuals, effectively robbing whole communities (Banda 2008). These are other way in which recolonisation happens among Indigenous people. In both threats, rural AmaBomvane continue struggling from a globalisation system that does not afford the rural context the same privilege it accords to urban areas. Also, communities where this knowledge is owned are often left out not benefiting, thus furthering colonialism.

The narratives also highlight that, as Muya (2002) earlier argued, children learn in a variety of ways. These ways include (but are not limited to) free play or interaction with other children, immersion in nature, and through directly helping adults with work and communal activities. Practice through experimenting, trial and error, independent observation, stories, proverbs, songs and rituals all form part of learning opportunities. In these ways of learning, values such as discipline are instilled. These Indigenous learning ways also provide a structure on what and how to facilitate learning. However, with the widening gap between homes and school, children miss out on these valuable lessons while also not accessing them at school. For instance, the older people have clearly identified how the schools speak

broadly to children about every subject matter whereas the community within which school is located values the form of using stories, proverbs and idiomatic expressions to guide children on how to navigate life and make choices. The example used was that of sexual education which the school is perceived as revealing too much information to kids at an early stage, which is not happening in the homes. Gyekye (1996) compiled more than 150 proverbs with their meanings demonstrating the different values represented related to religion, marriage and family life, survival, goodwill, communal and individual values, responsibility, work ethic, knowledge and wisdom, morality, human rights, chieftaincy and ancestors etc. Much learning about values and way of living can happen through listening and understanding the deep meaning of these proverbs.

The various Indigenous ways of learning such as those mentioned above also render Indigenous education accessible and inclusive as they provide a multidimensional background for the acquisition of knowledge (Ndubuisi 2013). However, the older people seem to be silent about the possibility of some problematic lessons in some of the proverbs and stories especially when it comes to sexuality education between girls and boys in the context we are in now. I wonder if this stance does not perpetuate the colonial stereotypes which are wrongfully positioned as culture.

For instance, while young men used to participate more in outdoor activities, young women participated mostly in indoor activities being guided by their elders. However, this was not standardised as in some households both boys and girls participated in any of the activities. What is worth noting is how women were positioning themselves as key role players in the survival of the family while most of what was done by men required the presence of land. I also witnessed through observations young girls herding as I was walking around between the villages. At times, these activities are shared between boys and girls and most of these were informed by division of labour as related to physical traits not by being considered incapable. For example, young men would go to the field to cut the trees and young women follow to then collect the already cut wood for home use. Similarly, in households where there are no male figures, all children are guided by the grandmother covering the roles of grandfathers as well among boy children. However, the absence of land, devaluing of working the land and the prominent absence of male figures in many households due to migration to cities for hard labour work in the mines (a legacy of colonial times) have left a huge burden on girls and women/grandmothers and affected these gendered roles which were guided by a division of

labour. Not only do these influence gender relations as we see them today but they also contribute to the shifting of roles.

We begin to see how everyone (teachers and parents) is unable to perform their roles as I argued earlier in the section on raising and socialising children. Teaching and learning is not only about focusing on the academic self of a learner but the whole self which is inclusive of a body, mind, soul or spirit. Older women are not able to play the role of passing knowledge to younger generations and to support the middle generation. The middle generation is not able to contribute to the upbringing of their children. Boys and men see themselves as having no roles to play in their homes, bored, waiting to be served and spending time in taverns. On the other hand, the girl child is burdened with the majority of household work and ensuring that everyone survives the day. The question is, does this state not serve to support the patriarchal violent gender relations as we see them? Asking this question enables us to understand the role of the colonial era, not pre-colonial in the current violent gender relations. Older women cite how older men are now spending time in taverns with younger boys drinking together. They raise the same issue with educators drinking alcohol with learners in taverns. They ask a profound question, how will the young respect the old and how will the old respect the young in such a situation?

I argue then that what the AmaBomvane are going through, the state they are in terms of finding themselves having to let go of their ways and knowledges, is not an isolated experience but should be understood as part of a contested history throughout Africa. In essence, the situation AmaBomvane find themselves in determines how they see themselves and subsequently influences who they are and what they know. Freire (1972) supports this view. It is this history that informs their present day (who they are) as well as their future – that is their process of becoming. The decolonial scholar, Ngugi wa Thiongo (2005) articulates this status of Indigenous people in his narrations about how British colonialism similarly destroyed traditions in Kenya. The missionaries propagated the portrayal of people's traditions as the works of the devil, thus banning many traditional ceremonies important for the health and well-being of Indigenous people. The AmaBomvane share the similar historic events where structures like imitshotsho were replaced by the church on Sundays. Similarly, the formal schooling is seen within the same lens, in its current status, as it has taken over various key aspects and activities of the home lives. These narratives demonstrate the continuing modern system challenges and its failures to develop systems of teaching and learning that combine more than one knowledge system. This remains missing

in our formal education systems thus contributing to the divided and hierarchical way of relating between knowledge systems. As Raymond (2011) pointed out, children are either kept in their homes and miss out on the modern aspects of education or forced into full-time formal schooling missing out on the Indigenous education. Once children are embedded in this formal schooling, the formal education system intentionally and/or unintentionally perpetuates the neo-colonial mentality by building aspirations of the modern urban life encouraging learners that they have no better life in their rural communities (Kaya, 2013). This discouragement on rural life is perpetuated by both the villagers who have adopted the narrative of urban life being the only better life, the teachers within the school, as well as the learners themselves as a result of the influences of dominant groups' practices. Being located in rural areas is seen as futureless and is perpetuated as such widely by educators who are also struggling within the coloniality matrix of power.

## **6. Preparing educators: a missing link in educator training and professional development**

Kincheloe's (2006) seminal work on Indigenous ways of being affirms that cultural contexts are always reflected in ways of being which influence knowledge production. While some educators both at Hobeni school and the FET college seemed to still value IK, they feel restricted and incapacitated to implement this in the classrooms thus confirming earlier findings (Ogunniyi 2007; Govendor 2009). As Battiste (2013: 175) writes, "every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change – education can be liberation or it can domesticate and maintain domination". The findings in this current study demonstrate some form of domestication and maintenance of domination which is upheld both by the curriculum structure as well as through the everyday practices of educators. This status not only confirms Ogunniyi's (2007) finding that this issue is attributed to the inadequate teacher training but also confirms Gumbo's (2016) arguments related to a general poor commitment towards centring IKs within the formal system. This study further reveals this poor commitment to centring IK as historical and linked to the inclusion stance taken when building of a democratic society.

Paying lip service to IK can be attributed to the inclusion stance taken by the South African democratic government in 1994. The structural Eurocentric epistemological struggle on which education systems was built on during colonial and apartheid administration were not touched at all. Rather, this structural and systemic struggle became a mere inclusion struggle without any intention to change the systems and structures which continue to subjugate IKs.



This inclusion struggle is the same stance taken towards integrating IKs in formal education in the forms of tokenism, paying lip service without any commitment to formally recognise and centre Indigenous literacies as part of a curriculum. An inclusion struggle meant that Indigenous people and their knowledges become included as tokens within an unchanging European system, requiring them to deny and leave behind who they are. It also meant that educators are not adequately prepared to recognise and build on IKs but to advance the Eurocentric Western knowledges upon which the formal schooling is largely based.

For the above reasons, some educators in the broader schools of AmaBomvane appear less critical of the multiple influences of dominant groups resulting in their inability to help learners connect the different webs of their lives as well as of knowledge production. This uncritical attitude is what opens room for the judgement of learners' intellectual worth as young people in this study have revealed as their experiences. Their poor backgrounds and level of mastery of English are often used to make these judgements. Educators further become intolerant of those who express concerns about not following a particular subject topic by mystifying those who question. They also mystify their home backgrounds through the undermining comments they make. In this process, educators reinforce the idea of inferiority of Indigenous learners and their languages while privileging English.

This was further confirmed in my spontaneous conversation with teachers after we had completed member-checking as they expressed how they do not want to teach in isiXhosa, asserting that English was a better language than isiXhosa. Their reasons were that isiXhosa is undeveloped and that certain terminologies are not developed and that the language is tedious and long. Such reasons not only position isiXhosa as unfit but also reject opportunities for multilingual learning and obscure the real ideological issues that AmaBomvane are faced with - issues that lead to the expressed disconnect, inferiority and sense of disavowal experienced by AmaBomvane learners. An idea already propagated in our formal education system and in the media. When educators reinforce and embody these attitudes instead of challenging them, they begin a journey of legitimising that such a social order, curriculum policies and its practices cannot be questioned. A reflective opportunity of examining these attitudes with learners is missed. Learners should feel and understand that all languages, including their own, have as much capability for expression and learning. Equally important, schools should not punish learners for using their language so that code-switching cannot cause conflict but be used as a pedagogical resource in both written and spoken

contexts (Mule 1999). Code-switching, in this context, can be a resource prioritised for ensuring understanding of subject content rather than mastery of language.

Though teachers identify some of these influences as affecting their learners, they in turn reveal how they have normalised the cultural practices of dominant groups as ‘official knowledge’. As observed by Freire (2016:79), those who espouse causes of liberation are themselves functioning in systems that generate the banking concept, thus end up being blinded by its dehumanising power. Freire (2016:79) states that they “paradoxically utilise this same instrument of alienation in what they consider an effort to liberate”. Using Freire’s logic, it can be said that AmaBomvane educators reveal practices and attitudes that mirror this banking oppressive order of society though they express wanting to assist learners to better their lives. That is, the educator chooses programme content and the learners adapt to it, the teacher chooses and enforces while learners comply, the educator knows and the learners know nothing. Such dehumanising power relationships undermine the co-construction process of curriculum thus making curriculum an unquestionable notion (Freire 2016). Other hegemony issues include imbalances between dominating economic goals (reflecting Western hegemonic values) and the silenced cultural and social goals in curriculum. (Mule 1999; Shava 2016; Msila 2016; Gumbo 2016; Higgs 2016). The latter is a glaring problem.

The mystifying judgements towards learners’ backgrounds reproduce the dehumanisation of learners. As Odora-Hoppers and Richards (2012) observed, these judgements demonstrate an attitude of casting light for the subjugated peoples and their ways of doing and living. An example of this mystifying attitude was when the Xhora school teacher expressed the perception that AmaBomvane parents mainly educate their children to aspire to marriage as the only achievement in life. This seemed contradictory to the literacies expressed by older AmaBomvane as marriage did not even come up. It can thus be said that educators pave the way for this dominant knowledge to exert a controlling influence on the learners as well as the society at large (Kanu, 2006). However, it is not a case that they act out these attitudes consciously as they are also products of an oppressive system. They have been trained to become the drivers of a system that mutes critical thinking. It is thus not surprising that these teachers whose minds have been deeply invaded by colonialism end up reproducing cultural colonialism. The formal schools in Xhora therefore uses educators and content, as the older people have also identified, to reinforce and legitimise this dominant Western knowledge, its

practices and culture. The educators serve as a vehicle for this hegemonic power over communities as rightful educative agents (Semali 1999).

The current study demonstrates how the educators' own critical thinking has been muted through the imposed coloniser curriculum which aims to re-mould what was seen as 'uncivilised natives' to resemble the coloniser (Kanu 2006). Teachers carry these 'taken for granted' assumptions embedded in the curriculum to classroom practices. When exposed to students, these experiences become a vehicle for eradicating identities thus alienating AmaBomvane learners from themselves. These are the functions and effects of coloniality and educators should resist its hegemony by creating curricula that re-integrates people to their reality instead of being a source of alienation (Govenor, Mudaly & James 2013). Educators sustain these colonial hegemonies through their daily acts and interactions with learners and the curriculum. Given these educator struggles, it may be the case that educator training needs to be transformed to facilitate both programmatic reconceptualization and educators' individual attitudes. Ukpokodu (2007) has written comprehensively on the need to develop educators' sense of consciousness of schooling as a socio-political act and social responsibility. Ukpokodu further writes that when educators are prepared with a social justice perspective, they will be able to transform and act as agents of change within classrooms, as well as engage in culturally responsive and responsible pedagogy.

It is here that Ramugondo's (2015) concept of occupational consciousness could be a useful construct for educators' journeys of liberating themselves from perpetuating colonial socialisation. She defines occupational consciousness as an act of ongoing awareness of hegemony dynamics and practices which are sustained through everyday doing. Using Ramugondo's (2015) occupational consciousness, educators can enter a reflective space of acknowledging first their realities in an unjust world. Secondly, they could see how their interactions with learners and the curriculum within classrooms could begin to disrupt practices that perpetuate colonisation of the mind. When educators are able to disrupt this status quo, they would also help learners to understand and reject the continued dominance of Eurocentric assumptions of superiority in all forms of contemporary knowledge. It is thus important for educators to be conscious of the ideologies they carry and continue to reproduce through teaching and learning (of both the hidden and intended curriculum). They must begin a step of delinking (Mignolo 2011) from the colonisers' cultural and ideological indoctrination and superiority that alienates both the learners and educators from themselves.

Kincheloe (2006) calls this decolonial practice of consciousness “Multilogicality”. It calls for different ways of seeing and being and for a critical ontological awareness. The training of educators is a critical space that should ensure that teachers are able to draw from different thought processes and facilitate co-creation of knowledges in classrooms. This re-connection, as Govenor, Mudaly and James (2013) affirm, is what would rebuild Indigenous identities as positive, powerful and self-reliant. The implications for training of educators relates to being able to produce educators with a new level of insight and who participate in rethinking their purpose within the formal and informal education systems (Govenor, Mudaly & James 2013; Kincheloe 2006). Their rethinking includes being open to collaborative work with the communities as valuable relevant holders of IK. This has potential for being a vehicle for educator emancipation. Not only will it contribute to efforts of restoring the identity of the learners but that of the educators as well.

The study reveals very poor or no collaboration among the custodians of IK and educators or curriculum developers. There are also no spaces for these stakeholders to dialogue and address concerns. The parents’ meetings and Student Governing Body spaces only serve the needs of the school and less from the community – there is a lack of dialogue and reciprocity. The implementers of the curriculum are also not well vested in IKs and tend to teach for examination. Traditional and local leaders as well as older people who facilitate knowledge in the communities are not involved in the design and implementation of the formal school curriculum. Older AmaBomvane’s inputs in such educational matters is often assumed by ‘education experts’ who design the curriculum (Pottier et al. 2003; Sillitoe et al. 2005). This pre-set curriculum designed by a selected few is the cause of many problems related to (ir)relevant curriculum. It creates vast challenges in the context of diversity as curricula should be an engagement process between and negotiated by all stakeholders (that is, the community/parents, learners and educators included). If education is three legged in its implementation levels, the question of not being three legged during designing stages is of concern with regards to collaborative learning.

Vygotsky (1978) is one learning theorist who advanced notions of collaboration and interaction in learning. From the practices of AmaBomvane, interaction and collaboration are key aspects of learning identified as embedded in daily doing and living. These practices and activities are contextually relevant learning opportunities with a potential to personalise learning in ways that are meaningful and aligned with AmaBomvane’s daily doing and living. In these practices, there is interaction that happens among different groups of people

and across generations (learners and educators or custodians of IK). Learners acquire knowledge by interacting with peers, teachers and elders (Turuk, 2008). As Turuk argues, this learning happens in interaction. We also hear how the elders facilitate the learning though giving opportunities for interaction, assisting the learners who in turn eventually get to be independent in the tasks, thus shifting this social knowledge to personal knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) extends this interaction argument by bringing the element of collaborative learning. This means, learning is activated as learners interact with their elders and peers in a collaborative way.

The current study shows that formal education practices place less emphasis on the collaborative practical and/or occupational skills. Indigenously, useful learning is when one is able to put knowledge learnt to practical use. Yet, the narratives reveal strongly how children no longer want to learn farming skills, despite the fact that their way of life revolves around agriculture. At schools, the same agricultural activities merely serve as punishment for those who have misbehaved. Also, agricultural activities are seen as being those for the uneducated. This shows how vocational education subjects are still not given priority. As a result, many villagers have let go of these activities as part of sustaining themselves and their communities. The irony is that once they migrate to the cities, the work they do involves the same hated activities in exchange for minimal wage. Not only do they become slaves in the cities, but their families are left broken and disintegrated and the cycle continues as their own children grow up without any parental input. In this situation, the intergenerational spaces of learning are lost. The opportunity to use these occupational and practical activities as learning opportunities is also lost. This could possibly be the result of a failing formal education system that does not adequately preparing learners for career building worldwide including and especially in their own rural contexts.

While this study reveals that learners bring to the classroom valid knowledge in mathematics, natural science or life sciences, farming and gardening and skills in many other areas, educators are unable to identify these skills and use them in classroom settings. Often, textbook teaching is followed despite the fact that teachers are aware of the skills that learners bring. Firstly, educators acknowledge that children bring to the classroom valid knowledge from the home. Secondly, they acknowledge that, as part of the educational philosophy of starting with the known before introducing the unknown – the learners' home knowledge is thus important. The challenge they face relates to how, in their classrooms, educators can tap into AmaBomvane's knowledges from the learners' everyday life to

schoolwork. This is a profound challenge as educators are either not familiar with this community knowledge and context or are also undermining the knowledge embedded in communities or do not know how to identify and use it. More so, the bias of focusing on global knowledge before local or IK (which is afforded an inferior status) while also preaching the principle of ‘starting with the known before unknown’ seems contradictory.

On one hand, older AmaBomvane attribute this challenge facing teachers to a lack of documentation of their knowledges to be able to guide educators in school, and have recommended that these findings be documented in a book that will enter the schooling system. On the other hand, some of the educators shared that, often, they do not understand the communities they teach in and the related knowledges because they do not live in these communities. They also do not engage with communities with the intention to understand local knowledge and context. These are some of the reasons why educators would not know how to identify, integrate or even comment on whether relevant local knowledges are meaningfully included or not. The teachers who are living in the communities and those who are from these communities were the only ones who critiqued that the local knowledge is not given space and value. When teachers understand the relevant local knowledges, they would be able to better plan and use teaching and learning approaches that recognise and value AmaBomvane’s knowledges. These knowledges would be in dialogue with the school knowledges, laying down similarities and differences that are empowering and not conflicting. They would empower because they would enable learners to evaluate both knowledges and make informed choices towards enhancing their ways of doing and living.

Additionally, in curriculum planning and design, all educators felt that the consideration of context is biased. This expression meant that urban contexts always become the yardstick and standard, thus taking away crucial and relevant knowledges and learning approaches to better equip rural learners. It is no wonder then that the children from rural areas are often seen as underperforming or unable to apply what they have learnt to their rural contexts. The finding also speaks to the erasure and denial of rural contexts as contributors to knowledge production and translation. Good education practice is about building on what the learner brings to the classroom and this would be a real implementation of starting from the known to the unknown. The result would be a meaningful education system with potential for decreased rates in drop-out, increased motivation for school, partnership from parents and achievement in rural areas (Banda 2008; Quiroz 1999).

## **7. Curriculum resourcing: opportunities towards a sustaining education**

The fight for sustaining relevance and coexistence remains alive today because of the entrenched neoliberal capitalist agenda which propagates the same history of misuse and marginalisation of ‘othered’ knowledges and thinkers. In post-independence Africa, Nyerere (1967) proposed relevance and excellence (in this order of priority) as two principles that should guide education. In his view, these principles would enable education to play a critical role in the development goals of Indigenous people as well as their identities which are characterised by poverty and inequalities (Nyerere, 1967). Facilitating the interplay between Indigenous and Western knowledge will enable relevance of education in many communities particularly the rural contexts, with IK becoming a vehicle for this relevance. Once this principle of relevance is achieved, Nyerere says excellence would be possible. Indigenous rural based learners will be able to also showcase their excellence as knowers, thinkers and beings in contexts such as contemporary South Africa. They will also be in a better position to exercise their choice to centre themselves in their excellence. This study reveals a multi-pronged approach towards achieving Nyerere’s vision.

Firstly, it would enable both an intra and inter-cultural dialogue between various ways of knowing, knowledge production and value systems (Kaya, 2013). Such a dialogue facilitates steps towards the coexistence of knowledges, practices and values. In this coexistence, as Castiano and Mkabela (2014) argue, spaces of negotiation, evaluation and validation of all knowledges, appropriation and re-appropriation of diverse kinds of knowledge, that is, the space where the silent coexistence would be transformed into an argumentative dialogue. Similarly, what AmaBomvane have referred to as a backward and forward motion between local and modern knowledges (Tinky – Penny in Mji) (Mji, 2012) would emerge as a best model of practice for integration.

Secondly, educational institutions will begin to live their purpose as sites for competing ideas, not sites for Western hegemony (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Mignolo, 2013). Each knowledge system would understand the differences and interactions between knowledges and reconstruct integrated knowledge systems well-adjusted per context (Ntuli, 1999; Seleti, 2010). A close-knit partnership in this process is important to enable the community to play its meaningful role in systematically providing a curriculum that has an Indigenous focus and a decolonial practice. Knowledge pluralism should form the basis of such a curriculum



reform with intersecting cross-cultural texts and images which give diversity to people's history. As older AmaBomvane state, their past is important in determining their present as well as their future aspirations. This is equally important for adapting and solving problems in their rapidly changing lives. The involvement of the community and parents through these partnerships will assist both educators and learners in re-defining, re-interpreting, expressing and acting upon school teaching and learning in a critical manner. The partnerships will further translate to an empowering teaching that feeds back to learners and parents, thus transforming them into change agents of communal progress of their own choice. Additionally, these direct interactions with the community will support the positioning of the community and land as significant sites for education.

Thirdly, the conflicting gaps between learners, parents and teachers would be addressed by have what Odora (2002) calls "learning communities" where parents become participants in their own children's learning both at school and in the community. I have already elaborated on how this collaboration could happen above. Of equal importance for learning communities is the already existing apprenticeship in the communities. This apprenticeship would serve as learning opportunities for skill building and practical experience. It would also serve as a strategy for putting the knowledges learnt into practical use in communities. In this arrangement of learning communities, the skills of elders and parents in the community would be two-pronged. One is within the community based education (apprenticeship) to facilitate experience and skills training in collaboration with educators. Secondly, they will be involved in the evaluation of learners within these apprenticeship programmes. The result here includes affording learners an opportunity to learn from both the home and the school with communities holding this learning together. Additionally, parents are actively participating in the design, planning and implementation of curriculum which is currently reserved exclusively for the so-called "experts" (Sillitoe et al. 2005) with powers to make decisions for the powerless communities. Therefore, the idea of learning communities is particularly important in contexts where a majority of parents have no formal education. It is also important in addressing the disconnect between communities and schools as well as the lack of nurturing that exists between the knowledge systems.

Another opportunity following the creation of learning communities relates to the school's role in contributing to building healthy homes and healthy communities. These apprenticeship systems could facilitate an alignment between an underpinning knowledge base and themed specific knowledges. These knowledges could further be aligned with both

related cross-cutting skills for the underpinning base and specific skills for themed specific knowledges. Such an alignment should indicate a balance between socio-cultural and economic goals of living well and enhancing lives. Essentially, this process must include a careful and deep thinking on what values should underpin these health and well-being oriented schools; what competencies and critical skills should the products of these schools have; and what participation and praxis centring teaching methodologies should be used. The notion of excellence would thrive among learners as this system would have ensured relevance.

The findings in this study on how AmaBomvane experience the formal schooling indicate a need to reconceptualise schooling and education so as to bring about change in Indigenous people's contexts. To date, it is evident that schooling has devoted much attention only on formal instruction modes of learning and knowledges. Learners may acquire basic knowledge in such a system, however, this learnt knowledge is not necessarily relevant and applicable for use in solving local problems in the everyday living of AmaBomvane's choices. It also does not seem to elevate these learners in new contexts within a racial capitalist system that uses AmaBomvane only for hard cheap labour and their raw materials. This system has no intention to ensure that AmaBomvane live and do well. Rather, it strips them of any autonomy over their lives, breaking down families and a way of living. This remains a huge challenge in the education of Indigenous people as the colonised which prompts the need to rethink how knowledge can be used to contribute to living well and sustainably.

AmaBomvane showcase how they create and make meaning of their knowledges. This creation and meaning making happens through interactions with the environment (the known), and interactions between people or generations and between social and physical relationships (Durie 2004). This interaction highlights the collective nature within which knowledge is produced and practised. Furthermore, it highlights Durie's (2004) assertions that the basis for such knowledge creation lies in the dynamic relationship which arises from the different interactions. Such a conceptualisation of knowledge creation exposes the absurdity behind positioning Western knowledge as the only knowledge central to knowledge production. It also exposes the individualistic, self-glorifying nature of Western knowledge creation, which ignores social elements in knowledge production and acquisition (Hamminga 2005). Such interactions and relationships could transform the formal education system into becoming relevant for AmaBomvane thus building a strong foundation for collaborative learning.

## Conclusion

Chapter 7 provided a critical discussion on the perspectives of AmaBomvane on the potential role of IK in transforming the formal education system for living well in Indigenous communities. The chapter explored and described:

- AmaBomvane's rural experience of the influence of the formal education system on their Indigenous traditions and knowledges and their links to health and well-being
- what stakeholders (elders, youth and teachers) identify as some of the Indigenous knowledges and ways of teaching and learning in these communities.
- how the identified knowledges and teaching and learning strategies of AmaBomvane can inform curriculum development and implementation in the formal schooling system.

Deprived of their knowledges and traditional livelihoods, AmaBomvane elders and parents have gradually lost their status and respect from their own children. The children are gradually being alienated from their everyday doing and living. The formal schooling remains the main source of this alienation and dissonance. From an Indigenous perspective, a critical education contribution to society is when people can put knowledge into practical use for enhancement of people's lives.

Challenges and opportunities for centring IKs and collaboration between educators and custodians of IK were identified. A sense of consciousness from both parents and educators may assist in disrupting the dominant acts of the formal schooling, using everyday doing and living of these communities as spaces for unlearning and relearning. Such everyday doing and living also presents opportunities for learning through participation and doing. These spaces could also be used to continue negotiating the value for IKs as well as enabling AmaBomvane to reclaim their self-determination.

# Chapter 8: Conclusion of thesis

## Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising key findings and revisiting the main purpose, research questions and methodology of the study. It further synthesises the key findings by referring to ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological implications. Limitations and recommendations are outlined.

## Summary of key findings

This thesis revealed a case of the complex dire situation of AmaBomvane with regards to how they experience and interact with the formal education system. This case exposes the absurdity of the often-assumed logic that it is a given for education to lead to success and living well. What is clear from this study is that this is not the case for Indigenous people whose knowledges and cultures remain subjugated by formal education. An important question to be asked is what kind of an education leads to the development of successful whole beings who are able to live well. The current formal education is critiqued for disrupting a cultural identity of AmaBomvane and creating cultural dislocations through imposing a socialisation that is akin to colonial education. This colonial desocialisation produces learners who have lost a connection with their culture and environments, who lack a sense of caring for one another, and who show no sense of social responsibility towards one another's growth. This education creates severe forms of alienation and promotes risky health behaviours which give rise to various health pathologies.

As depicted in the figure below, a striking colonial feature prominent in the broader villages of Xhora is depicted by the three typologies found to be existing, identified through interacting with formal education. Some identify with a foreign appropriated self (known as *Amagqobhoka – the pierced, converted*), while others identify with the colonial appropriated self (known as *Amaqaba – the refusers, unconverted*). Other seem to be moving between the above colonially constructed binaries, thus experiencing the worst form of alienation (*Agonisers - the uncomfortable in-betweeners*). Children start not only hating themselves but also their localities. The consequences are seen in the constructed hierarchy of superiority and inferiority tensions between the formally educated and uneducated people. Consequently, this colonial education is held responsible for destroying the communal social fabric and

introducing conflicting identities which are harmful to the health and well-being of AmaBomvane.

### Typologies Imposed by Colonial Education: Harm **Done** to Health & Wellbeing



Figure 22: *Typologies Imposed by Colonial Education: Harm (Done to) Health & Well-being*

Following these imposed typologies, this study further reveals that these interactions with formal education result in negative health indicators and risky health behaviours within the AmaBomvane communities. This interaction is entangled with contextual factors, and is intersectional. Therefore, colonial education in particular, emerged as a potential negative social determinant of AmaBomvane's health. Formal schooling is historically and currently deeply colonial. Its attempt to assimilate learners into an urban white Western lifestyle has produced learners who do not understand themselves and their people. The predetermined, unquestionable nature of curriculum serves as an indicator of formal education's colonising attitude. It is colonial because it produces people who are deeply alienated from themselves, their lands, cultures, ancestors, languages and knowledges. This alienation is a result of a cultural dislocation which in turn has given rise to emotional, psychological, physical, and social ills.

Chapter 7 explored the need to develop and strengthen a local knowledge base as the foundation of curriculum. This needs to incorporate elements of IK such as traditional practices and rituals, food production, relationships across generations, and relationships between people and their physical, social and spiritual environments. When these literacies are centred in the education of children, AmaBomvane are of the perception that the risky

behaviours and ill health would be reduced. It is thus possible that Indigenous-based education may contribute to better health outcomes and hinder the reproduction of further cultural colonisation.

The colonial matrix of power, knowledge and being intersects with everyday doings and living of Indigenous people to ultimately alienate indigeneity. There is therefore reason to believe that Indigenous health may continue deteriorating unless Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing and living are recognised and centred as pivotal to knowledge production. Such centring of Indigenous ways of knowing must be defined and designed by and with the Indigenous people. The AmaBomvane narratives invite various stakeholders to listen and respond by demonstrating how learners can learn through participation and doing.

AmaBomvane do not separate their doing from knowing and being and this seems to be an integral part of their living. In this link, doing (which refers to praxis) is particularly emphasised as the linking notion of health and education. To be is to do. To know is to do. This is how AmaBomvane live. This suggests praxis as an integral component worth noting in teaching and learning, requiring recognition and centring of Indigenous literacies. The portrait of village Indigenous literacies emerging in this thesis represents a different narrative from, and an alternative to the dominant colonial way of defining Indigenous ways of knowing as backward, ignorant and primitive.

Consciousness through everyday doing and living (Ramugondo 2015) can guide the reconstruction of Western dominated formal education systems. Consciousness here becomes a liberating thought that is outside the reproduction of colonial relations. A focus on learning through participation and doing could lead to contextualised and sustaining education, which AmaBomvane aspire towards. Genuine and reciprocal collaboration and interaction between community custodians of knowledge and educators in curriculum development and implementation could be a vehicle for reclaiming self-determination and voices of Indigenous people. The intergenerational connection across all creatures and interaction between creatures and environments as a characteristic of Indigenous education becomes key here. This would bring alive the notion of collaborative learning in formal educational institutions. It would also form part of a decolonial practice towards sustaining education. For this to happen, there are issues that need to be taken into consideration.

The first issue relates to the various key knowledges of AmaBomvane which might nurture and mould learners' spiritual and cultural identities and contribute to a self-actualising and

sustainable upbringing of children. These knowledges were and continue to be displaced by the hegemonic formal education system. A related finding that is of concern is the shifting of roles, with land and everyone across generations having lost their significant role as educative agents of these knowledges. The lack of collaboration between the communal educative agents and educators in formal schooling worsens the status quo. Furthermore, a lack of commitment to integrate (integrate means centring in this context) these knowledges exacerbates the struggle. This is evident in the inadequate preparation of educators to implement this centring despite assertions made in policy documents. The second issue relates to the purpose of education institutions. This study suggests the need for education institutions both within informal and formal sectors to collaborate with each other and collectively build healthy homes, healthy communities and healthy individuals who are able to do and live well as a significant outcome of teaching and learning.

This study reveals that the lack of commitment to centring IKS and the resultant lip service and tokenism afforded to IK is historical and tied to the current inclusions stance and struggle taken towards the building of a democratic society. This inclusion stance is being challenged by the current calls for decoloniality. It is this inclusion stance that has served to keep the subjugation status quo and is the reason the struggle with formal education continues. It is the reason teachers are also victims of this system, continuing to use the same alienating ways of teaching and learning in what they consider efforts to assist children to liberate themselves and their lives. A constant form of tokenism features through selecting a few Indigenous literacies and introducing them as oral rhetoric in arts and craft, or during heritage day music and drama events. But these activities are not regarded as an integral part of the official curriculum. There is no meaningful learning related to AmaBomvane cultures when these events take place.

The decolonisation struggle of AmaBomvane is not merely for inclusion, but a need for structural change and a need to rethink the conceptualisation and values embedded in the dominating European ways of being, knowing, doing and living. This rethinking includes shifting our mindset away from wanting to civilise, save and cast light to subjugated peoples, their knowledges and ways of doing and living.

Colonial education undermines knowledges of AmaBomvane in four ways. Firstly, it fails to use Indigenous literacies as worthwhile subject matters for a liberating learning process of AmaBomvane. Secondly, it hinders exposure of learners to the foundational self-actualising



and sustaining IK of their communities. Thirdly, these alienating experiences create attitudes that militate against learning and valuing Indigenous literacies as integral to their everyday doing and living. Lastly, it breaks down any possible interactions and relationships where knowledge which makes up curriculum is created. All these factors undermine the everyday doing and living of AmaBomvane children as well as the transformative nature of the identity of AmaBomvane.

A health-centred curriculum is one that enhances people's lives as its primary goal. Enhancing people's lives, in this context, means doing and living well. This is possible when we rethink curriculum as an engagement process between its contents, the learner, the community and the educator. In this context, everyone is afforded their rightful non-hierarchical reciprocal positions and roles as learners and knowers. When curriculum addresses the socio-cultural realities of learners it is following the learning philosophy of starting from the known to the unknown. A disregarded factor is the educational connection between the home and school. If children are crossing these borders from home to school (and vice versa), it seems important to understand the values that underpin both of these two contexts and the knowledges produced in each. For a minority of children such border crossings will be familiar and easy, while for children from under-resourced and more traditional Indigenous backgrounds, the journey is fraught with difficulty. This is because they cannot relate or identify with the curriculum as well as connect it back to their own home environments in terms of how they can use this knowledge to free first themselves, and secondarily, their communities from colonial hegemony.

A life-enhancing curriculum is also possible when a curriculum socialises Indigenous learners in a manner that strengthens their understanding and sense of UbuBomvane world rather than the de-socialisation akin to colonial education. It is also a curriculum that enables learners to think and speak from their environmental experiences and interactions, to question, to challenge and interrogate contradictions. It is a curriculum that is built on the interactions and connections with land as a first educative agent. It is a curriculum that is not only relevant but sustaining. A curriculum that promotes a sense of always becoming - identity as consciousness and transformation. This curriculum builds learning communities which join the other members of the body of knowledge namely, the educators, the learners and the parents.

This is to say, educators and academics are not the repositories and only sources of knowledge but knowledge is owned by various stakeholders in diverse fields. Rather, the community, home and school are all significant fields where learners are shaped. Most importantly, the family and the community stimulate major behavioural and cognitive characteristics that children internalise daily, enabling them to deal with the social world. AmaBomvane are legitimate co-creators of knowledge who need to work together with schools to reconstruct school knowledge.

This is the decolonised praxis of AmaBomvane's reality which is currently missing in order to link knowing and living in formal education. A decolonised praxis resists mainstream teaching and learning approaches and challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the hidden curriculum within and outside classroom practices. It thus disrupts this status quo in order to unsettle the hegemony that prevents learners from learning from their environmental experiences. This is a significant shift needed in the field of curriculum. It would minimise the conflicts arising between AmaBomvane's sense of the world and the subjects taught within formal schooling. Making curriculum relevant to everyday living and being, through centring praxis of people's realities, is one potential way of addressing the alienation and disconnect emerging from colonial education.

The main contributions of the study are as follows.

### **Ontological implications**

The struggle for humanity continues. The struggle for Indigenous people to define themselves continues in a context where their relationships with their land and all creations are severely disrupted. This, to an extent that the sacred valuable process of naming children with particular names becomes meaningless.

The study rejects the modern construction of one identity and asserts that reclaiming the multiple identities of Indigenous people which make up their ontological reality could pave ways for them to reimagine their whole way of life. The starting point proposed by AmaBomvane is that of collaboratively documenting and disseminating a book about themselves, written by themselves, that will ultimately enter schools. I further proposed the opportunity of disseminating their narratives using digital participatory film. These tasks would contribute to a continuous process of reimagining themselves.

It is worth noting that the term ‘Indigenous’ remains a contested concept. It does not position Indigenous peoples as a homogenous group. It also does not come from the Indigenous peoples themselves. The same applies with the terms *Amaqaba* and *Amagqobhoka*. In the modernity/coloniality logic, these terms remain dirty as they form part of the imperial paradigm of difference. Indigenous and *Ubuqaba* thus meant existing outside the modern time – hence the ‘primitive’ label while *ubugqobhoka* put people through some form of baptism with the intention to overcome the former. This study exposed the absurdity of this logic in denying Indigenous communities their right to imagine themselves and rightfully contribute to knowledge production as thinkers and knowers. A decolonial turn for AmaBomvane is that of rejecting the internalisation of these divisive and inferiorising terms which continue to undermine their health and well-being. Such a position enables them to emerge as questioners and agents of change in their own communities.

The study also argues that it is important to refer to people in research through the names they give themselves. In this case ‘AmaBomvane’ was the preferred name. Decolonised research should open spaces for the silenced to communicate their frames of reference. The study found the use of a sagacity approach valuable in unmasking the disempowering history of research and facilitating the voices of AmaBomvane to speak back and up to power. This approach also laid a relational way of researching *with* AmaBomvane. This is what decolonisation of research entails, where the often theorised about reclaim their position of naming themselves, and where they are speaking from. In conclusion, this study showed how to open spaces for the colonised to speak from their point of reference and to theorise about their realities as they see them. It challenges the history of the dominant single narratives by bringing different narratives in conversation through the sagacity approach within merged methods.

### **Epistemological implications**

The study challenges the assumption that African Indigenous ways of knowing have no value in thinking about, and shaping the world we live in. The reliance on the officiated curriculum places restrictions on engagements with the curriculum which means that Indigenous literacies are largely missing and that a true practice of the philosophy of moving from the known to the unknown is not implemented effectively. Epistemologically, this study contributes to the notion of delinking from disciplinary boundedness to trans-knowledge. It contributes to advocating for epistemic freedom of AmaBomvane with the understanding that

this is the foundation for decolonising their mind and attainment of other freedoms. To understand the realities of AmaBomvane, the study has managed to bring together and harmonise diverse genres of knowledge and knowledge reconstructions thus enhancing the call for decoloniality. In this regard, the study demonstrates one way of engaging in a knowledge production process which is open to epistemic diversity. It showcased a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions as an alternative that education systems could adopt if it is to liberate and enhance people's lives in its curricula.

The study also innovatively contributes to bringing in conversation education and health in ways that have not been done before as a way of demonstrating a transcendence of disciplinary divisions. Given that current health systems are failing to improve health outcomes for Indigenous people as per the persisting quadruple burden of disease, it is important to look at the contribution of formal education systems to this quadruple burden. Most importantly, we must look to Indigenous literacies and cultures for possible solutions.

It is critical that those who are exposed to the coloniality experience align both their epistemic and social locations in order to think and speak from a position of indigeneity. This is particularly important so that we are always cautious of extrapolating theories from different epistemic and social positionalities to make sense of realities within a different position. I am excited about contributing to reclaiming AmaBomvane's epistemologies as valid and life enhancing. These epistemologies challenge the formal education system to open up to the growing body of knowledge from Indigenous people and its significant contribution to tackling the persistent disparities in health and well-being of colonised people. This is a quest for a pluriversal world where all knowledges play an equal role in not only making sense of the past and the present but also in directing the future of the world. This work offers a number of additional epistemic implications in terms of how this research can be applied:

- It offers re-imagined articulations and understandings of AmaBomvane's indigeneity and literacies in diasporic and dominant Eurocentric contexts, and how they are negotiating for their Indigenous cultures and identities. This lived experience is fraught with complex complicit and resisting ways as part of their journey of consciousness.
- It presents new readings of literacy and purpose of education where educators look beyond the academic self of learners to the whole self (body, mind and soul

together) as central to knowledge production. The notion of a nurtured spirit in teaching and learning becomes important towards disrupting the social amnesia produced by formal schooling where one's own history is forgotten and deemed unimportant. It is equally important in disrupting the notion of focusing only on the academic self of a learner to the detriment of the body and spirit as other senses of knowing. This body, mind and spirit cannot be engaged without the ancestral life which is a representation of a conscious engagement with one's history and identity as anchored in the Indigenous education philosophy. This is important for the success of Indigenous learners and for strengthening an understanding of their whole selves and identity.

- It suggests ways of facilitating teaching and learning in order to amend the disconnect and alienation resulting from a fragmented de-contextualised knowledge system that splits the body and mind. This includes recognition of elders in relationship with the teachers and the learner rooted in interconnection with the community. This is crucial because the failure of the learner is a failure of the elder and the teacher. An example of these transformed ways of teaching include identifying everyday communal activities as learning opportunities and to make the learning areas practical to everyday living and doing. These identified opportunities will be integrated for vocational/apprenticeship and for use to explain mathematical, scientific and geographical concepts within classrooms. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, herding, beading and weaving for mathematics concepts. In this way, the vocational education is not positioned as a separate subject afforded a lower status compared to science and maths but could be incorporated as opportunities for building experience, competence and skills across all learning areas. This may disrupt the hierarchy placed on the existing different learning areas. Learners can only hold onto their cultures and indigeneity with pride when they appear to have value and potential towards leading healthy lives. Inclusive workshops with all these four stakeholders will guide this process.
- It offers ways towards creating a land-based, sustaining and humanising curriculum for better health and well-being. This type of a curriculum is significant in ensuring that formal education is not dehumanising but healing. Leaving out crucial aspects of one's identity in knowledge production is

dehumanising and detrimental to spiritual, social and emotional health and well-being.

In short, a paradigm shift must take place to create formal schools that are anchored in a particular philosophy and understanding of the community from where it is located and then teach other philosophies from outside the context. In the light of these epistemic implications, I therefore provide the following framework (See figure 23 below) as a response to the case in question:

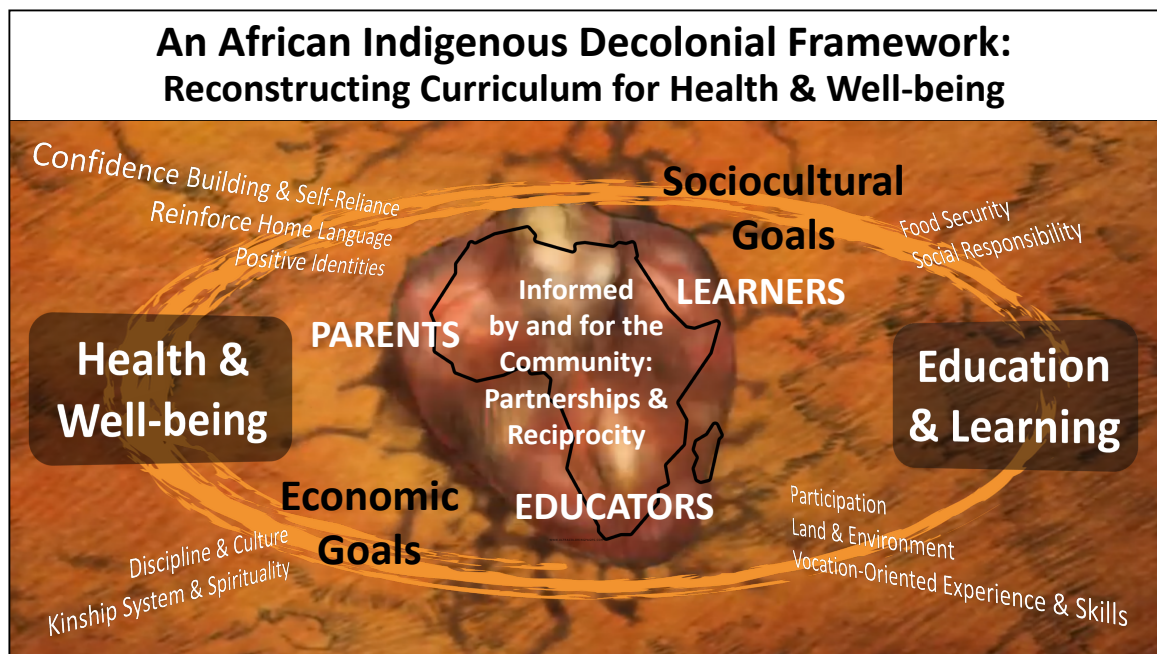


Figure 23: An African Indigenous-Decolonial Framework for reconstructing curriculum for health and well-being

It is to be remembered that the aim of such a reconstruction of curriculum as depicted in the above figure is to give Indigenous African epistemology its rightful place as a valid way of knowing, as well as rupture the current hegemonic structure of defined knowledge.

### Methodological implications

The above epistemic freedom cannot be realised without decolonising and indigenising research and methodology because methodology is integral to the epistemic freedom struggle. IK research remains largely conventional and still located in the dominant paradigms in spite of calls to decolonise research methods. These locations make it easy for mainstream research to ignore other ways of knowing and thinking. This study's greatest contribution is thus methodological as it has implemented what it means to indigenise and



decolonise methodology within the Indigenous research paradigm. This was about conducting research that gives space for the world senses of the marginalised to communicate from their frame of reference. It breaks the boundaries by being integrative in its design while also remaining true to, and informed by indigenous perspectives. Additionally, the study offers an inclusive research process approach where the community is consistently engaged about the process to ensure that research is respectful and guided by the cultural values (ethics). This process included having a research assistant who kept the researcher accountable all the time. Such an inclusive and authentic collaborative process serves to ensure that researchers are ethical and are constantly questioning their power relations with the place and people.

The study also offers value in merged methodologies. I demonstrated that merged methods can also be used to enhance respectful and culturally safe (ethical) research. Merged methods can be used to facilitate willingness to address power differentials in the relations between the researcher, co-researchers, and communities. They can also be used to open more spaces for the often silenced or the less powerful to bring forth their voices in the research process and this could strengthen participatory research. Additionally, I contend that use of merged methods enhances establishment of authentic engagement processes, inclusive and trustworthy research. These are important indicators for any research that is to be beneficial to communities directly and indirectly.

One of the methods in which indigenous knowledges can transform and decolonise curriculum and research in the education sector is a deliberate attempt to privilege African indigenous ways of knowing, seeing and doing when conducting research and when developing course material content for teaching purposes. I am not advocating for a fundamentalist position that entirely rejects western views in knowledge production here but calling for a need to reverse the fallacy of universality and its epistemicides on other knowledges. This is a quest for ecologies of knowledges in order to fully understand the human condition. There is a need for methods and methodological approaches that open up anti-oppressive and anticolonial critical dialogues, where participants are viewed as researchers in their own right, actively participating in deconstructing the colonial narratives and co-constructing new narratives about Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. This study offers an example of how to include diverse participants with multiple perspectives and how to use diverse spaces for dialogue. The study shows that factoring the principle of dissemination throughout the study is one form of ensuring relational epistemology and



methodology. This is to say, researchers need to share views of other participants so that participants, during the data collection phase, can start engaging and dialoguing with one another's multiple perspectives. A phase of data analysis with participants therefore also starts from this collection phase through getting participants to engage and dialogue with one another's views, to question and reconstruct integrated knowledge systems which are well-adjusted per context. Such a methodology facilitates a way forward for coexistence where the data collection becomes a space of negotiation, evaluation and validation of all perspectives. The research here begins a journey of co-analysing with all participants to ensure adequacy of interpretation as well as an ongoing process of knowledge sharing through the data collection phase. These are methods that could transform data collection processes into argumentative dialogues embedded in reciprocity and relationships as aligned with Indigenous ways of doing.

The literacies identified by AmaBomvane and their cultures need to be further documented and disseminated through the use of participatory visual methods in order to enter the formal education system and its curricula. AmaBomvane and I, as part of a continuous collaborative community engagement outcome of this study, will start this documentation with the purpose of AmaBomvane's reclaiming and revitalisation of their epistemologies.

A key role player in research processes with Indigenous communities is language used to develop conceptual frameworks and ways of thinking about people's lived realities. It is important to take note of language issues when doing Indigenous research. Equal caution should be taken during translation and presentation of data. I found it helpful to retain key isiXhosa concepts as I was presenting data. This plays a role in adequacy of presentation as I often struggled with the meaning an English concept gave when certain terms were translated. This may be a huge risk in studies done by non-Indigenous researchers who also do not know the language of the participants. This risk, when not managed accordingly, serves to compromise adequacy of presentation of data from the lived experiences of participants.

Studies focusing on voicing experiences of Indigenous people and their communities need to use more the Indigenous paradigm in the local context and begin to adapt or develop research designs that best suit communities. This is to ensure that Indigenous conceptual framings and senses are largely present.

The growing evidence on negative outcomes associated with colonisation, assimilation and forced removals of people from their lands as well as barriers to accessing their natural resources for livelihoods should drive the ongoing research agenda. This agenda will seek to shift from deficit-centred research to better identify the strengths of Indigenous people and their cultures.

It is necessary to consult co-researchers throughout the research process, balancing the perspectives of the researcher and the community as research processes are negotiated from the start to the end of the study. Every researcher needs a consultant from the community to ensure that processes are always aligned and respectful to the community values. Research planning needs to take into account distances between communities and weather changes while also allowing flexibility and participation.

### **Axiological implications**

Despite sharing commonalities with the communities, being a researcher still places one in a complex positionality in relation to the researched community. Researching, when conducted respectfully, responsibly and in collaboration with communities, can serve as a healing process. Interactions with AmaBomvane and the process of affirmation of their existence was healing to both AmaBomvane and me and contributed positively to our well-being.

The ethics process needs to start with communities before approaching the institutional structures for permission. This will mandate researchers to engage communities from proposal development phase in order for communities to guide the research process plan ensuring that their Indigenous principles, values and practices reflect as part of an Indigenous ethical framework. This is also to facilitate research that is needs based, appreciative, community building and healing to oppressed communities.

Institutional committees must deconstruct their power and open up to Indigenous ways of knowing and relational ethics. Indigenous elders should also be fairly represented in ethics reviews of Indigenous studies.

Researchers ought to be careful of methods that valorise the dominant culture and should ensure respect towards the values of communities. As such, I suggest that ethics reviews guidelines include principles of accountability, respectful representation, reciprocity and relationship building, thus mandating all researchers to demonstrate how studies are reflective of these values. Part of this work includes demonstrating how the researched have

actively participated in framing the study, research questions and the process of collecting and disseminating data. This way of managing ethics transforms the notion of the researched as participants to co-researchers.

There is a need to be reflective of the role of academic and methodological imperialism in research. Co-researchers' names should be revealed, should they wish to, in order for their knowledges in the study to be traced to them as originators.

## **Limitations**

The study had the following limitations which were experienced during data collection stage with reference to ensuring more multiple perspectives:

- The initial plan was to get two teachers from the TVET college, a head of the TVET and three curriculum developers representing the different levels of education (primary, high school and TVET). Due to circumstances related to work demands of these stakeholders, I only managed to interview one teacher from the TVET college. The head was not available. I also did not get responses from all the curriculum developers I wanted to consult both by email and telephonically. When I visited the district offices in Dutywa, no official was available or willing to participate.
- The original plan was to include youth from both the high schools and the TVET college, however, it was difficult to get college students who are AmaBomvane.
- Young boys mostly did not want to participate, therefore their voices and perspectives were not sufficiently presented.
- The dominance of the English language in the construction of knowledge remains a limitation of research. Though data collection was done in isiXhosa, personally, I found it challenging to follow the institutional doctrine in writing up the knowledges of AmaBomvane using the English language as it may not have done justice to their voices and experiences, despite having ensured adequate representation. I often found English to be inadequate and silencing the true and deep theorisation. The example here is the typologies which capture the extent of the damage of the modern-colonial order of divide and conquer and English words do not carry across the deep meanings. Language plays a significant role in ensuring understanding of research problems within the value system and context of co-researchers especially in this context where

the perspectives of a Western trained researcher dominates in defining research problems.

- This has been a very personal project for me but I realize that it is not the kind of knowledge that everyone embraces. It is in the nature of this methodology to bring my own subjectivity, though it does create limitations. However, to fully embrace that all knowledges are indeed incomplete and partial, it is equally important to acknowledge that there is always an element of subjectivity in any research. Part of this methodology celebrates the findings that knowledge is limited yet always evolving.
- Given the case of the study, I was not trained as an educator. I was thus unable to measure my recommendations against the practicalities of running a school system. I am also not sure how easy or complex it may be to implement such recommendations. However, this journey enabled me to think innovatively and openly as this study was a conceptual piece and thus not directly and practically implementable.

## **Recommendations of the study**

### *For AmaBomvane*

AmaBomvane also need to enter a space of reclaiming their knowledges. The first step would be to revitalise these knowledges within the homes through their everyday doing and living. Repositioning AmaBomvane everyday doing and living would facilitate a reconstruction of the formal and non-formal learning structures that were destroyed (and continue to be stripped) by colonisation.

I see this taking two different directions. One is AmaBomvane's active role in advocating a more meaningful integration (centring) of their knowledges within formal schooling in order for formal schooling to transform. The second is lobbying and initiating their own schools as AmaBomvane, with financial and material support from government, so that they can fully pave the direction they want to take. The recently opened Black school for girls in Khayelitsha (Molo Mhlaba) is a best case example modelling this practice. The second stance is much more important and needs to happen parallel to the former as a form of resistance to assimilation as well as avoid the risk of reducing the plight of AmaBomvane to a mere inclusion stance. These processes would unfold in the following ways:

- Firstly, enable AmaBomvane to transcend the position of wanting to return to their ways but develop an alternative response to their current living conditions and negotiate a safe space that they owe to their ancestors, their children and the coming generations.
- Secondly, this process would give AmaBomvane the power to control their lives and establish their lost connectedness and relationships with their social, spiritual and physical environments.
- Thirdly, they will be able to achieve what they highlight about the importance of giving meaning to where one comes from in order to be able to give meaning to where one is currently and where one is going (the becoming and the always transforming identity).
- Lastly and most importantly, to restore and reconstruct their learning structures which are reflective of their understanding of the purpose of education, that is, to contribute to building healthy homes and healthy communities.

A series of communal dialogues across the AmaBomvane villages and consultative workshops could facilitate this process. This could be framed as participatory action research as will be alluded to under recommendations for further research later in this chapter.

*For Health Systems and policies – a possible meaningful collaboration with education*

Coloniality and colonial education need to be listed as broader social determinants of health in the burden of disease and disability. Recognising colonialism would mean realising that it is not a finished project, rather it continues to display negative effects on the health of Indigenous people. Recognising coloniality is also about realising how our own health systems may be reinforcing and reproducing coloniality through Indigenous health discourses. Health systems thus need to do more than educate people on healthy eating in a top-down approach through the existing school health promotion outreach programmes, but facilitate dialogues on different perspectives. There is a need to sensitise Indigenous consciousness in order to deconstruct systems and structures that serve to push the most disadvantaged to eat unhealthy foods or be subjected to disabling living and working conditions.

Recognising coloniality and colonial education is also about recognising the inextricable link between health and education. This means realising that poor health and well-being reproduces and leads to poor educational outcomes and inequities, while poor education feeds inequities which put people at risk for behaviours which lead to poor health and well-being. Given the inextricable link between health and education, it is recommended that health systems realise and expand the significant role of schools in facilitating health promotion programmes. However, this should not be limited to the notion of outreach programmes but within the lens of meaningful dialogical community based engagements. An outcome of this collaboration should be to embed health and well-being as a core learning area in the national curriculum (I explain this further in the next section on recommendations for education systems).

The inextricable relationship between health and education should be the primary motivation for any intersectoral collaboration projects driven between the health and education departments and systems. These collaborations should develop an indigenised social determinants of health framework for the school health programmes which includes colonialism as a broader social determinant of Indigenous health. The initial steps should be to facilitate consultative multiple perspectives dialogues with Indigenous people in various contexts and backgrounds about meaningfully integrating health and well-being in schools as part of expanding the school-health focus of health promotion. I note the importance of grounding these collaborations in relationships and interactions with Indigenous people and especially the often neglected Indigenous rural communities, to ensure that the integrated health and well-being approach is directly linked with the everyday life of the children, family and communities concerned.

Additionally, South African Health Reviews need to include Indigenous health and data on Indigenous peoples. Equally important is to review how current health policies and systems are responding to Indigenous health. The first step is to link the current health disparities to the unresolved land question and its effects on Indigenous health. The other step is to deconstruct how health systems and policies have viewed Indigenous systems as an add-on, and reconstruct systems that are grounded on and integrative of IKS.

*For Education systems and policies*

It is recommended that the education system and its policies acknowledge the inextricable relationship between health and education. When learners are not healthy, they cannot learn and if they cannot learn, they are less likely to do well in life, which later translates into poor health. The recognition of health and well-being is an important part of what education is about, hence AmaBomvane are of the perception that health should service lives and enhance life. This means embedding health and well-being as a core learning area within the South African national curriculum. It also means recognising that positive health and well-being is a key enabler of learning. Such a position highlights the much needed significant role of schools in health and well-being. School health programmes must become integrated as a significant part of school curriculum and learning experiences. In this way, the school culture can support better outcomes for health and well-being by contributing to building healthy communities and healthy homes.

Practically, this means that school curriculum should promote an understanding of a broad range of health influences as well as aim to equip learners with necessary skills to manage living well and healthy as the AmaBomvane suggest in their envisioned type of education.

It is recommended that the identified Indigenous literacies be considered within the context of understanding diverse literacy experiences of different people. The initial step is to position praxis and interaction in formal education as a critical component of curriculum that is not only relevant but also sustaining. Learners should be able to actively participate and interact with curriculum drawing from their environmental experiences, not only through textbooks and teachers. This will be an alternative way of facilitating knowledge production from different perspectives, developing an understanding of learners' contexts and enabling learners to put this knowledge into practical use both in their current everyday doing and later in life.

Equally, attention needs to be given - in rhetoric and in practice - to the cultural issues that determine and impact upon the curriculum from the language of instruction, to the role of home languages, and the place of IK and its custodians in a clearly modernist curriculum.

Teachers should consult elders for guidance in providing culturally meaningful learning environments and activities, where possible, incorporating heritage language and culturally-based early learning curricula into children's everyday experiences. Therefore, it is important that formal school educators make a concerted effort to create a welcoming environment in



which elders can play meaningful roles and also encourage young children to display what they know and integrate it into their learning at school. Such a co-created curriculum that taps into the riches of culture could build bridges between home and school.

The knowledges of AmaBomvane need to be taken seriously and get the recognition they deserve (Warren et al. 1996). Noluthando (co-researcher) also recommended the need for such collaborative practice asserting that it would assist with embracing multiple ways of thinking and interaction between educators and parents. She further argued that this collaboration could position both the educators and parents as an influential group to advance complaints related to the status of IKs to government. Furthermore, it would transform the current position of education as three legged to an education that has four members of the body of knowledge. In this transformed view, the community serves as an integral mother body (heart) where knowledge is produced and practised. Equally, the current educator-centred methods of instruction based on rote learning need to change as they are not compatible with IKS ways of learning. More dialogue and wide consultation is needed to address issues of integration.

The practical, occupational and vocational subjects can still assist rural Indigenous people to liberate and sustain themselves in the context of higher unemployment as we have in South Africa, while also escaping the exploitation and slavery work for the benefit of capitalists. Formal education needs to transform and begin to integrate task-based and performance-based subjects through entrepreneurial and apprenticeship programmes. This is a model that should be prioritised from primary school level with the aim of producing local entrepreneurs as Nyerere (1968) visualised in his education for self-reliance. This is the same model of education the older people would like to see in the schooling system. Such a model would oppose the negative perception associated with these practical and occupational skills as well as the inferiority status they have been accorded.

It is recommended that instead of ticking assessments done with learners as part of a checklist, educators could engage learners in real, practical research activities where they document their local knowledges as part of assessment FOR and AS learning. Given the existing low ratio of teachers to learners, it is understandable that teachers may not have the time to do all the research activities into the history associated with particular people in the local context. However, learners can go into their communities to engage in hands-on research work. Educators would use this opportunity of reading learners' work as a learning

path for themselves. They would use this work for more engagement in the classrooms aimed towards achieving a strong IK base as the ultimate goal for formal schools.

### *For Higher Education Institutions*

This study recommends a focus on social justice education in higher education institutions, particularly in the public health training, in order to produce graduates that are conscious of injustices and are of service to Indigenous people for better health and well-being. The trainers of public health practitioners need to also go through social justice courses to be able to teach this to learners and model it through their ways of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning should be recognised as a lifelong transformation journey.

Public health and health systems could start by approaching and defining health in ways that are reflective of the voices of Indigenous people who are the most disadvantaged and who experience health inequities. Public health could also devote attention to addressing the existing health inequities both inside and outside the health sector by disrupting the devastating consequences of conquest and colonisation of people's lands. Health systems ought to be informed about the needs by the communities they serve, to enable better health outcomes. This servicing is to be understood as a lifelong journey of transformation.

Of particular interest, this study recommends that public health rethinks its role in the current land debates as linked to addressing the burden of disease and disability. It could also start rethinking the skills and experience learners need given the need for health institutions to also contribute to building healthy homes and healthy communities. The study thus calls for transformation of programmes to reflect a meaningful reframing of IKS for health and well-being within the public health systems. This transformation requires that the existing hierarchical power between the health sector and the Indigenous communities it services be engaged with. It also calls for collective action with communities and contextually specific health promotion strategies. This reframing, if informed by communities, could contribute to raising the voices of Indigenous people within health systems and also strengthen citizen-oriented systems. It is to be noted that such programme reconceptualization should go hand-in-hand with educator training in order for the educators to be adequately prepared to teach such a transformed curriculum. Part of this preparation includes developing social justice-oriented diversity courses to prepare socially conscious academics who will in turn produce practitioners who are socially conscious, accountable and responsible.

This study recommends community-based educator training as a strategy for preparing educators in awareness of Indigenous ways of knowing; valuing community knowledge, culture and its people; for obtaining a strong community knowledge base; and in building culturally responsive pedagogies. The study also recommends a social justice-focused educator training that produces socially conscious educators who will in turn produce learners who are socially responsible. The most important need for educators is firstly to be able to facilitate connection between the content of curriculum and real life experiences of learners which are the sources of knowledge. Secondly, they need to be culturally competent to create learning environments that build social interaction and cultural knowledge and embrace students' diverse backgrounds instead of rejecting them. Thirdly, teachers ought to understand the relationship between school learning and home culture and how these multiple perspectives influence learning, curriculum content and supportive social situations for learning. This could be achieved through understanding students as a whole, including home/communal lives of students. Educator education should thus be situated in local contexts in order to connect it to the community and create opportunities for learning through the community and collaboration. This study reveals the importance of taking cognisance of community educator knowledge.

To achieve socially responsible education, educators need to be adequately prepared to develop the knowledge, skills and inherent qualities or characters to work with learners from various socio-cultural backgrounds. Teacher training needs a radical shift by grounding IK as a strong base for teacher education. The implications for teacher training then include opportunities to also interact with custodians of IK throughout their training and to apply this model to their own learners in classrooms. Educators need to see learning as an interaction, and collaborative. In that way, they would change their relations with these Indigenous communities, learn how to integrate IK in formal schooling, and strive towards preparing lessons that are meaningful to the realities of the learners. This could lead to a contextualised sustaining curriculum which shifts the biography and geography of knowledge as well as education institutions that live their true purpose; that is being sites of competing ideas (Mignolo 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). The learners would thus better relate to their educators as well.

Both health and education policy makers, researchers, educators and health practitioners are urged to give equal respect to Western and Indigenous forms of knowledge as they currently do not represent equal values and thus are not treated equally or in an equitable manner.

There should not be a disqualification of IKs in favour of Western knowledges as this creates a hierarchy of knowledges. Such a hierarchical construction privileges one knowledge as an authoritative basis for judging other knowledges. Knowledge construction in South Africa should thus demystify this Western thought and ensure to debunk these hierarchical dualities, for it is impossible to understand the importance of IK in school curricula through these binaries. The rural/urban structural duality could be an opportunity for knowledge intersection and a positive space for multiple forms of knowledge.

Educators, researchers and academics should be challenged to overcome the above-cited hierarchies which give rise to domination and control, thus disempowering learners. These stakeholders have a responsibility to act as agents of change in the development of new ways of knowing. Higher education should thus lead the initiation of a new consciousness that embraces ecologies of knowledges.

#### *For Further Research*

I am aware that there is more work to follow from this study because no conclusions are ever complete or absolute. I know that there is more work to be done with respect to how these findings can be put into practical use within the formal education system. I therefore invite further studies which could be taken up by other Indigenous researchers:

- There is a need for participatory action research where the AmaBomvane or other Indigenous communities set out a plan where they are central in enacting the roles they see themselves playing in formal schooling. This recommendation will have to occur in a context of a receptive policy environment which links to the following recommendations.
- There is a need to dialogue with educators' and curriculum developers' perceptions regarding integrating health and wellbeing as a core learning area.
- There is also a need for participatory action research on a decolonised training of educators using Ramugondo's concept of occupational consciousness and guided by the reconceptualised Indigenous-decolonial concept of curriculum for health and well-being as offered by this study's conclusions and implications.

- It will be critical to explore research questions related to what competencies and skills are needed as part of preparing educators to support an Indigenous-decolonial curriculum for health & well-being.

I acknowledge that change will be messy, thorny, overwhelming and complicated, but this is inevitable in a process of deconstructing coloniality and bringing about a radical recognition of indigeneity. These guiding steps could assist in navigating this journey to a more positive and stronger future. Liberation is not only a choice but also the ultimate prize for Indigenous people.

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# Appendices

## Institutional Ethics Approval Letter



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
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### Approved with Stipulations New Application

08-Feb-2017  
Ned, Lieketseng LY

**Ethics Reference #: S16/04/069**

**Title:** An exploration of the potential relevance of an interplay between Indigenous and Modern education knowledges to contribute to health and well-being of communities: A case study of an indigenous South African community.

Dear Mrs. Lieketseng Ned,

The **New Application** received on **21-Apr-2016**, was reviewed by members of **Health Research Ethics Committee 1** via Expedited review procedures on **01-Jun-2016**.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: **01-Jun-2016 -31-May-2017**

The Stipulations of your ethics approval are as follows:

**Any intervention material and/or questionnaires that are generated during the course of the work will need to be submitted for ethical approval prior to implementation/use.**

Please remember to use your **protocol number (S16/04/069)** on any documents or correspondence with the HREC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the HREC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

#### **After Ethical Review:**

Please note a template of the progress report is obtainable on [www.sun.ac.za/rds](http://www.sun.ac.za/rds) and should be submitted to the Committee before the year has expired. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Translation of the consent document to the language applicable to the study participants should be submitted.

Federal Wide Assurance Number: 00001372  
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005239

The Health Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

## Change of Topic approval letter



19/09/2018

**Project Reference #:** 4475

**Ethics Reference #:** S16/04/069

**Title:** An exploration of the potential relevance of an interplay between Indigenous and Modern education knowledges to contribute to health and well-being of communities: A case study of an indigenous South African community.

**Updated Project Title:** "Reconnecting with indigenous knowledge in education: exploring possibilities for health and well-being in Xhora, South Africa"

Dear Mrs. Lieketseng Ned,

Your amendment request dated 18 September 2018 refers.

The Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) reviewed and approved the amended documentation through an expedited review process.

The following amendment was reviewed and approved:

- Updating of the project title as indicated above.

**Where to submit any documentation**

Kindly note that the HREC uses an electronic ethics review management system, *Infonetica*, to manage ethics applications and ethics review process. To submit any documentation to HREC, please click on the following link: <https://applyethics.sun.ac.za>.

Please remember to use your **Project ID** [4475] and ethics reference number S16/04/069 on any documents or correspondence with the HREC concerning your research protocol.

National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) Registration Numbers: REC-130408-012 for HREC1 and REC-230208-010 for HREC2

Federal Wide Assurance Number: 00001372

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005240 for HREC1

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Number: IRB0005239 for HREC2

The Health Research Ethics Committee complies with the SA National Health Act No. 61 of 2003 as it pertains to health research and the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles, Structures and Processes 2015 (Department of Health).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Ashleen Fortuin

Health Research Ethics Committee 1

## English Version: Information Sheet and Consent Form Template

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:** An exploration of the potential relevance of an interplay between Indigenous and formal education knowledges to contribute to health and well-being of communities: A case study of an indigenous South African community.

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** S16/04/069

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Lieketseng Ned

**ADDRESS:** Department of interdisciplinary Health Sciences, University of Stellenbosch.

**CONTACT NUMBER:** 0825451370

Dear Participant,

My name is Lieketseng Ned and I am currently conducting a study for my PhD. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project that aims to explore and describe the potential relevance of Indigenous knowledges in transforming the formal education system for better health and well-being.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Your participation in this study is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)** at **Stellenbosch University** and will be conducted according to accepted and applicable National and International ethical guidelines and principles, including those of the international Declaration of Helsinki (2013).

#### **What is this research study all about?**

- The proposed study will occur in four villages in the Xhora area of the Eastern Cape (Nkanya, Hobeni, Madwaleni and Xhora.) There are no other sites. There will be two talking circles for each study site.
- This study wants to find out how knowledges from the home and those from the school speak to each other and how this connection can be used as a tool for development of the communities and its people. I am doing this study to find out what Indigenous knowledge concepts can be further facilitated within the school and to identify spaces for this integration to happen within the formal schooling.
- For this study, I will be conducting a face to face interview with you in the form of storytelling. I will just ask a few questions to just help you think more, then you are free to tell me whatever your story is regarding Indigenous knowledge and development.

#### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

- You have been invited to participate because as an older person in the village, you are the custodian of this knowledge, play a critical role in facilitating this knowledge within the home and have a better understanding of the key concepts and its meaning for development of this area.

**What will your responsibilities be?**

- To openly narrate your story regarding your Indigenous knowledge and how it is facilitated at home as well as how it could be further facilitated at school. You will also respond to any probing questions I might ask in response to your narrated story if you want to. I will also request to observe and take photos of practical opportunities where this knowledge is being translated to the younger generation in the home. You will also participate in the feedback session to ensure that the study clearly presented what you have shared, time will be given for you to correct and add where necessary.

**Who will benefit from taking part in this research?**

This research will benefit-

- The custodians of Indigenous knowledge- the older people
- The learners in the villages
- The teachers, principals and curriculum developers

**Are there any risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- There are no risks of injury involved when you participate in this study.

**If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?**

- Nothing will be held against you should you not agree to participate in this study.

**Who will have access to the information collected in this study?**

- Only the researcher and her three supervisors will have access to the information given here. Please note that there is a possibility of being easily identifiable when participating in this study. Your information is confidential and if you like, your real name will not be used in the thesis, so you will not be identified. However, you are allowed to request that your name be used.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study but your transport and meal costs will be covered for each study visit. There will be no costs involved for you, if you do take part.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You can contact Lieketseng Ned at (+27) (0) 825451370 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the Health Research Ethics Committee at 021-938 9207 if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and hand in to the investigator.**

Yours sincerely

Lieketseng Ned  
Principal Investigator

### Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled (*insert title of study*).

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that I may be easily identifiable by participating in this study and I would still like to participate.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the study researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.
- I agree to be audio recorded and photographed during the interviews.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 2016.

**Signature of participant**

**Signature of witness**

### Declaration by investigator

I, Lieketseng Ned declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 2016.

**Signature of investigator**

**Signature of witness**

## **IsiXhosa Version: Information sheets and consent forms**

INCAZELO NGOPHANDO NENCWADI YESIVUMELWANO: ABANTU ABADALA  
NAMAGQALA OLWAZI LOMTHONYMA

**ISIHLOKO SOPHANDO:** Uphando lokuqonda ubudlelwane obungakhona phakathi kwemfundo nolwazi lwemveli nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokwemfundo yasesikolweni. Injongo kukufumanisa ubana obu budlelwane bungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana kwabantu: Olu luphando olujongene nendawo eyodwa ekhethiweyo eMzantsi Afrika ngokuba ibalasele ngezinto zemveli.

**IREFRENSI:** S/6/04/069

**UMPHANDI OPHAMBILI:** Lieketseng Ned

**IDILESI:** Department of interdisciplinary Health Sciences, University of Stellenbosch

**UMNXEBA:** 0825451370

Molweni,

Igama lam ngu-Lieketseng Ned ndenza uphando kwizifundo zobugqirha. Ndicela ube ngomnye wabantu abandicedisayo kuphando endilwenzayo. Oluphando lumalunga nonxulumano phakathi kolwazi lomthonyama kunye nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokufunda esikolweni. Injongo yoluphando kukuchaza ukuba ingenzeka into yokuba kubekho unxibelelwano nobudlelwane kwezindidi zemfundo zimbini. Ngaphezulu koko ndifuna nokubona ukuba ingaba olulwazi luvela kulamacala omabini luyakwazi na ukuthi xa luthe lwadibana lukhuthaze impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabahlali.

Ndicela uthathe ixesha lakho ufundisise lencazelo. Lencazelo inika incukacha ngoluphando. uyabongozwa ke uba uxhumane nomphandi ophambili xa udinga incazelo ethe vetshe. Khumbula ukuba ukubandakanyeka kwakho koluphando kuxhomekeke kuwe, awunyanzelekanga. Xa ubona ukuba awunokwazi kuqhubeka utsho. Ukungandincedisi kwakho koluphando akuzothintela nto empilweni yakho. Ungayeka phakathi xa uthanda awunyanzelwa uba uqhubeke.

Imvume yokuqhubeka noluphando ifunyenwe kwidyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando**. Ngaphezulu njengomphandi ophambili ndithembisile kwabasemagunyeni ukuba yonke into ezokwenzeka koluphando izakulandela imiqathango eyabekwa lihlabathi jikelele eHelsinki ngo-2013

### **Oluphando lungantoni kanye-kanye?**

Ngoluphando umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba ulwazi lomgquba olulwemveli luhambiselana njani nolu lwasesikolweni. Ngaphezulu umphandi ufuna ukuhlulaza ubana oluxhumano

lungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabantu endaweni yabo. Enye into ke umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba apha kwizinto zemveli/zomthonyama luluphi ulwazi oluntsokothileyo lwezempilo olungangena kwimfundo yasesikolweni lungena phi njani.

Oluphando luzoqhutywa kwilali ezine e-Xhora eMpuma Koloni (Nkanya, Hobeni, Madwaleni naseXhorha). Azikho ezinye iindawo. Kuzakubakho iindibano ezimbini kwilali nganye. Umphandi uzochonga isikolo samabanga aphantsi sibe sinye, nesinye esamabanga aphezulu.

Apha koluphando ndizakucela udibane nabanye abantu. Apho ndizonibuza imibuzo sihleli sisonke, kodwa iphantse ibe libali. Ndizobuza imibuzo ukuncedisa nicinge ngale nto sithetha ngayo ukuze nikwazi ukundibalisela ngebali lenu malunga nolwazi lomthonyama nempilo yenu apha elalini. Ingxoxo yethu yonke izakuthwetyulwa ngonomathotho

### **Kutheni kucelwe wena nje?**

Kucelwe wena ngenxa yolwazi lwakho oluntsokoyhileyo ngezinto zakwantu. Uligqala futhi unolwazi ngezinto zemveli. Unamava futhi unendima enkulu ebalulakileyo oyidlalayo ukukhuthaza iimfundiso zemveli nendlela ezingenza ngayo kubekho impilo engcono eluntwini.

### **Uxanduva lwakho yintoni?**

Uqhabalake utyatyadule nje undibalisele ngebali lakho malunga nolwazi lomthonyama. Izinto endifuna ukuziqonda ncakasana kukuba lufundiswa njani ekhay kwaye lungangena njani esikolweni. Izakuba khona ke nemibuzo endizoyiveza phakathi ukufumana ingcombolo kwizinto ezinomtsalane. Ndicela ithuba lokubukela, ndithathe iifoto, okanye nam ndibe ngomnye wabantu abathathinxexheba kumsebenzi ofundisa umntu osemntsha ngezinto zomthonyama. Ndizophinde ndikucele ubuye uzikondimamela xa ndichaza endikufumeneyo khonukuze ufumane u=ithuba lokundilungisa apho ndiphazame khona ngentetho yakho.

### **Ngubani ozakuzuza koluphando?**

Abantu abazakuzuza koluphando ngaba balandelayo:

Amagqala neengwevu ezinolwazi ngezinto zemveli

Abafundi besikolo

Ootishala, iinqununu nabacebisi ngenkqubo yokufunda

### **Ingaba Kukho ubungozi kwisiqu sakho ngokuzibandakanya noluphando?**

Akukho bungozi ozibeka kuko ngokuzibandakanya koluphando.

### **Xa ungafuni kundincedisa, ingaba ikhona enye into?**

Xa ungafuni kuzubandakanya noluphando ungoyiki utsho. Akukho izokwenzeka kuwe.

### **Ngubani ozoba nemvume yokujonga okanye afunde yonke into esiyithethileyo?**



Ngumphandi ophambili nabafundisi bakhe. Ukhumbule ke ukuba kungenzeka kubekho abantu abakwaziyo. Yonke into esizakuthetha ngayo yimfihlo yethu. Kodwa xa uthanda ungacela ukuba igama lakhonlokwenyani lisetyenziswe xa sele sibhala iziphumo zophando.

**Ingaba uzakubhatalwa ngokuzibndakanya koluphando okanye zikhona iindleko?**

Hayi akukho mali uzoyibhatala futhi kungekho mali ifunwa kuwe. Nto nje uzakubhatalelwa imali yeteksi neyokutya.

**Okokugqibela khumbula oku kulandelayo:**

Ungafowunela umphandi ophambili uLieketseng Ned kule namba 0825451370 xa unemibuzo okanye uhlangabezana nengxaki.

Ungafowunela idyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando.** 0219389207 xa unezikhalazo okanye ungenelisekanga yindlela eluqhutywa ngayo oluphando.

Nawe uzawubanayo eyakho ikopi yelencaza. Ze uyigcine kakuhle.

**Xa uvuma ukuba ube ngomye wabantu ababandakanywa koluphando, ndicela utyikitye lencwadi yesivumelwano ilandelayo uyinikezele kumphandi lowo.**

Ozithobileyo

Lieketseng Ned

Umphandi Ophambili

**Incwadi Yesivumelwano:**

Ngokutyikitya apha. mna..... ndiyavuma ukubandakanywa koluphando lusihloko sithi - *Uphando lokuqonda ubudlelwane obungakhona phakathi kwemfundo nolwazi lwemveli nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokwemfundo yasesikolweni. Injongo kukufumanisa ubana obu budlelwane bungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana kwabantu: Olu luphando olujongene nendawo eyodwa ekhethiweyo eMzantsi Afrika ngokuba ibalasele ngezinto zemveli.*

Ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyifundile okanye ndiyifundelwe lencazelo ngophando futhi ibhalwe ngolwimi endilwaziyo nendikwazi ukulithetha.
- Ndilinike ithuba lokubuza imibuzo futhi ndenelisekile.
- Ndiyayiqonda into yokokuba ukubandakanyeka kwam kolu phando kuxhomekeke kum andiqweqwediswanga.
- Ndingayeka noba kunini na impilo yam inakuthintelwa nto.
- Ndingacelwa ngumphandi ophambili ukuba ndiyeke ndingaqhubeki nophando xa ngaba kubonakala ukuba andiniki lutho akanye ndiyagwenxa.
- Ndiyayiqonda ukuba ingxoxo nentetho yethu izakuthwetyulwa ngonomathotholo.
- Ndiavuma ukuba iifoto zithathwe

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ingqina

**Isivumelwano nomphandi ophambili:**

Mna Lieketseng Ned ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyicacisile yonke into ebhalwe apha ku \_\_\_\_\_
- Ndimkhuthazile ukuba abuze yonke imibuzo anayo futhi ndathatha ixesha elaneleyo ukumenelisa ngeempendulo
- Ndiqinisekile futhi ndiyakholwa ukuba ucacelwe ngayo yonke into equka oluphando njengoko sithethile
- Akhange ndicele uncedo lukatoliki

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya mphandi

INCAZELO NGOPHANDO NENCWADI YESIVUMELWANO: ABACEBISI  
NGENKQUBO YEMFUNDO, IINQUNUNU KUNYE NEETITSHALA

**ISIHLOKO SOPHANDO:** Uphando lokuqonda ubudlelwane obungakhona phakathi kwemfundo nolwazi lwemveli nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokwemfundo yasesikolweni. Injongo kukufumanisa ubana obu budlelwane bungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana kwabantu: Olu luphando olujongene nendawo eyodwa ekhethiweyo eMzantsi Afrika ngokuba ibalasele ngezinto zemveli.

**IREFRENSI:** S/6/04/069

**UMPHANDI OPHAMBILI:** Lieketseng Ned

**IDILESI:** Department of interdisciplinary Health Sciences, University of Stellenbosch.

**UMNXEBA:** 0825451370

Molweni,

Igama lam ndingu-Lieketseng Ned ndenza uphando kwizifundo zobugqirha. Ndicela ube ngomnye wabantu abandicedisayo kuphando endilwenzayo. Oluphando lumalunga nonxulumano phakathi kolwazi lomthonyama kunye nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokufunda esikolweni. Injongo yoluphando kukuchaza ukuba ingenzeka into yokuba kubekho unxibelelwano nobudlelwane kwezindidi zemfundo zimbini. Ngaphezulu koko ndifuna nokubona ukuba ingaba olulwazi luvela kulamacala omabini luyakwazi na ukuthi xa luthe lwadibana lukhuthaze impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabahlali.

Ndicela uthathe ixesha lakho ufundisise lencazelo. Lencazelo inika incukacha ngoluphando. uyabongozwa ke uba uxhumane nomphandi ophambili xa udinga incazelo ethe vetshe. Khumbula ukuba ukubandakanyeka kwakho koluphando kuxhomekeke kuwe, awunyanzelekanga. Xa ubona ukuba awunokwazi kuqhubeka utsho. Ukungandincedi kwakho koluphando akuzothintela nto empilweni yakho. Ungayeka phakathi xa uthanda awunyanzelwa uba uqhubeke.

Imvume yokuqhubeka noluphando ifunyenwe kwidyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando**. Ngaphezulu njengomphandi ophambili ndithembisile kwabasemagunyeni ukuba yonke into ezokwenzeka koluphando izakulandela imiqathango eyabekwa lihlabathi jikelele eHelsinki ngo-2013

**Oluphando lungantoni kanye-kanye?**

- Ngoluphando umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba ulwazi lomgquba olulwemveli luhambiselana njani nolu lwasesikolweni. Ngaphezulu umphandi ufuna ukuhlaza ubana oluxhumano lungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabantu endaweni yabo. Enye into ke umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba apha kwizinto

zemveli/zomthonyama luluphi ulwazi oluntsokothileyo lwezempilo olungangena kwimfundo yasesikolweni lungena phi njani.

- Oluphando luzoqhutywa kwilali ezine e-Xhora eMpuma Koloni (Nkanya, Hobeni, Madwaleni naseXhorha). Azikho ezinye iindawo. Abantu ekuzakuxoxwa nabo ziitishala, iinqununu nabacebisi kwinkqubo yezemfundo.
- Apha koluphando ndizakucela ukuxoxanawe ubuso nobuso. Apho ndizonibuza imibuzo sihleli sisobabini, kodwa iphantse ibe libali. Ndizobuza imibuzo ukunancedisa nicinge ngale nto sithetha ngayo ukuze ukwazi ukundibalisela ngendlela ethi niyisebenzise ukuzisa ulwazi lomthonyama kwimfundo yalapha esikolweni nokuthi ingenziwa njani loo nto ngokunokwakho.

### **Kutheni kucelwe wena nje?**

- Kucelwe wena ngoba uyititsha/inqununu/umcebisi wenkqubo yezemfundo futhi onolwazi ngendlela ekufundiswa ngayo esikolweni. Uyacelwa ukuba ubalise ngezinto ozifundisayo esikolweni nokuba uzifundisa kanjani. Ngaphezulu injongo kukufumanisa okokuba lungena njani ulwazi lwemveli kwizinto ezifundiswa ezikolweni nokuthi lungena phi nini. Ikwalthuba lakho lokuveza iimbono neenkolelo zakho malunga nokusetyenziswa kwemfundo yesikolo ekhaya.

### **Uxanduva lwakho yintoni?**

- Uqhabalake utyatyadule nje undibalisele ngebali lakho malunga nolwazi lomthonyama. Izinto endifuna ukuziqonda ncakasana kukuba lufundiswa njani ekhaya kwaye lungangena njani esikolweni. Izobakhona ke nemibuzo endizoyiveza phakathi ukufumana ingcombolo kwizinto ezinomtsalane. Ndizophinde ndikucele ubuye uzikondimamela xa ndichaza endikufumeneyo khonukuze ufumane u=ithuba lokundilungisa apho ndiphazame khona ngentetho yakho.

### **Ngubani ozakuzuza koluphando?**

- Abantu abazakuzuza koluphando ngaba balandelayo:
  - Amagqala neengwevu ezinolwazi ngezinto zemveli
  - Abafundi besikolo
  - Ootishala, iinqununu nabacebisi ngenkqubo yokufunda

### **Ingaba Kukho ubungozi kwisiqu sakho ngokuzibandakanya noluphando?**

- Akukho bungozi ozibeka kuko ngokuzibandakanya koluphando.

### **Xa ungafuni kundincedisa, ingaba ikhona enye into?**

- Xa ungafuni kuzubandakanya noluphando ungoyiki utsho. Akukho izokwenzeka kuwe.

### **Ngubani ozoba nemvume yokujonga okanye afunde yonke into esiyithethileyo?**

- Ngumphandi ophambili nabafundisi bakhe. Ukhumbule ke ukuba kungenzeka kubekho abantu abakwaziyo. Yonke into esizakuthetha ngayo yimfihlo yethu.

Kodwa xa uthanda ungacela ukuba igama lakhonlokwenyani lisetyenziswe xa sele sibhala iziphumo zophando.

**Ingaba uzakubhatalwa ngokuzibndakanya koluphando okanye zikhona iindleko?**

- Hayi akukho mali uzoyibhatala futhi kungekho mali ifunwa kuwe. Nto nje uzakubhatalelwa imali yeteksi neyokutya.

**Okokugqibela khumbula oku kulandelayo:**

- Ungafofuna umphandi ophambili uLieketseng Ned kule namba 0825451370 xa unemibuzo okanye uhlangabezana nengxaki.
- Ungafofuna idyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando.** 0219389207 xa unezikhhalazo okanye ungenelisekanga yindlela eluqhutywa ngayo oluphando.
- Nawe uzakubanayo eyakho ikopi yelencaza. Ze uyigcine kakuhle.

**Xa uvuma ukuba ube ngomye wabantu ababandakanywa koluphando, ndicela utyikitye lencwadi yesivumelwano ilandelayo uyinikezele kumphandi lowo.**

Ozithobileyo

Lieketseng Ned

Umphandi Ophambili

## Incwadi Yesivumelwano:

Ngokutyikitya apha. mna..... ndiyavuma ukubandakanywa koluphando lusihloko sithi - **An exploration of the potential relevance of an interplay between Indigenous and formal education knowledges to contribute to health and wellbeing of communities: A case study of an indigenous South African community.**

Ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyifundile okanye ndiyifundelwe lencazelo ngophando futhi ibhalwe ngolwimi endilwaziyo nendikwazi ukulithetha.
- Ndiliniwe ithuba lokubuza imibuzo futhi ndenelisekile.
- Ndiyayiqonda into yokokuba ukubandakanyeka kwam kolu phando kuxhomekeke kum andiqweqwediswanga.
- Ndingayeka noba kunini na impilo yam inakuthintelwa nto.
- Ndingacelwa ngumphandi ophambili ukuba ndiyeke ndingaqhubeki nophando xa ngaba kubonakala ukuba andiniki lutho akanye ndiyagwenxa.
- Ndiyayiqonda ukuba ingxoxo nentetho yethu izakuthwetyulwa ngonomathotholo.
- Ndiyavuma ukuba iifoto zithathwe

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ingqina

## Isivumelwano nomphandi ophambili:

Mna Lieketseng Ned ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyicacisile yonke into ebhalwe apha ku \_\_\_\_\_
- Ndimkhuthazile ukuba abuze yonke imibuzo anayo futhi ndathatha ixesha elaneleyo ukumenelisa ngeempendulo
- Ndiqinisekile futhi ndiyakholwa ukuba ucacelwe ngayo yonke into equka oluphando njengoko sithethile
- Akhange ndicele uncedo lukatoliki

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya mphandi

INCAZELO NGOPHANDO NENCWADI YESIVUMELWANO: ABAFUNDI

**ISIHLOKO SOPHANDO:** Uphando lokuqonda ubudlelwane obungakhona phakathi kwemfundo nolwazi lwemveli nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokwemfundo yasesikolweni. Injongo kukufumanisa ubana obu budlelwane bungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana kwabantu: Olu luphando olujongene nendawo eyodwa ekhethiweyo eMzantsi Afrika ngokuba ibalasele ngezinto zemveli.

**IREFRENSI:** S/6/04/069

**UMPHANDI OPHAMBILI:** Lieketseng Ned

**IDILES:** Department of interdisciplinary Health Sciences, University of Stellenbosch.

**UMNXEBA:** 0825451370

Molweni,

Igama lam ndingu-Lieketseng Ned ndenza uphando kwizifundo zobugqirha. Ndicela ube ngomneye wabantu abandicedisayo kuphando endilwenzayo. Oluphando lumalunga nonxulumano phakathi kolwazi lomthonyama kunye nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokufunda esikolweni. Injongo yoluphando kukuchaza ukuba ingenzeka into yokuba kubekho unxibelelwano nobudlelwane kwezindidi zemfundo zimbini. Ngaphezulu koko ndifuna nokubona ukuba ingaba olulwazi luvela kulamacala omabini luyakwazi na ukuthi xa luthe lwadibana lukhuthaze impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabahlali.

Ndicela uthathe ixesha lakho ufundisise lencazelo. Lencazelo inika incukacha ngoluphando. uyabongozwa ke uba uxhumane nomphandi ophambili xa udinga incazelo ethe vetshe. Khumbula ukuba ukubandakanyeka kwakho koluphando kuxhomekeke kuwe, awunyanzelekanga. Xa ubona ukuba awunokwazi kuqhubeka utsho. Ukungandincedisi kwakho koluphando akuzothintela nto empilweni yakho. Ungayeka phakathi xa uthanda awunyanzelwa uba uqhubeke.

Imvume yokuqhubeka noluphando ifunyenwe kwidyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando**. Ngaphezulu njengomphandi ophambili ndithembisile kwabasemagunyeni ukuba yonke into ezokwenzeka koluphando izakulandela imiqathango eyabekwa lihlabathi jikelele eHelsinki ngo-2013

**Oluphando lungantoni kanye-kanye?**

- Ngoluphando umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba ulwazi lomgquba olulwemveli luhambiselana njani nolu lwasesikolweni. Ngaphezulu umphandi ufuna ukuhlaza



ubana oluxhumano lungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuhlalisana kwabantu endaweni yabo. Enye into ke umphandi ufuna ukuqonda uba apha kwizinto zemveli/zomthonyama luluphi ulwazi oluntsokothileyo lwezempilo olungangena kwimfundo yasesikolweni lungena phi njani.

- Oluphando luzoqhutywa kwilali ezine e-Xhora eMpuma Koloni (Nkanya, Hobeni, Madwaleni naseXhorha). Azikho ezinye iindawo. Sizakuba neendibano sixoxe kwindawo nganye kwezi zibaliweyo.
- Apha koluphando ndizakucela ukuxoxa nani ubuso nobuso. Apho ndizonibuza imibuzo sihleli sonke sisebenzisa iifoto zenu enizakuzifoto nisenza imisebenzi yasekhaya nasesikolweni. Kulengxoxo sizoba nayo ndifuna ukubona ukuba ulwazi enilufumana emakhaya luhambiselana njani nolu enilufumana esikweni. Futhi ndifuna nokuqonda ubana obu budlelwane bunay indima obuyidlalayo ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana apha ekuhlaleni.

### **Kutheni kucelwe wena nje?**

- Kucelwe wena kuba ungumntu omtsha apha elalini. Bonke abantu abatsha basafunda. Bafundiswa ekhaya nasesikolweni. Kengoko ke ndifuna ukuqonda ukuba uyidibanisa njani into oyifindiswe ekhaya naleyo uyifundiswe esikolweni. Ngokufanayo ke ndifuna ukuqonda uba le uyifunda esikolweni ingena njani ekhaya.

### **Uxanduva lwakho yintoni?**

- Uzakunikwa ikhamera ozakuyisebenzisa ukuthatha iifoto ezibalulekileyo uze nazo kwindibano sizakuxoxa ngazo.
- Izobakhona ke nemibuzo endizoyiveza phakathi ukufumana ingcombolo kwizinto ezinomtsalane. Ndicela ithuba lokubukela, ndithathe iifoto, okanye nam ndibe ngomnye wabantu abathathinxexheba kumsebenzi okanye kwezinye izinto enizenzayo phaya njengabantwana.
- Ndizophinde ndikucele ubuye uzikondimamela xa ndichaza endikufumeneyo khonukuze ufumane ithuba lokundilungisa apho ndiphazame khona ngentetho yakho.

### **Ngubani ozakuzuza koluphando?**

- Abantu abazakuzuza koluphando ngaba balandelayo:
  - Amagqala neengwebu ezinolwazi ngezinto zemveli
  - Abafundi besikolo
  - Ootishala, iinqununu nabacebisi ngenkqubo yokufunda

### **Ingaba Kukho ubungozi kwisiqu sakho ngokuzibandakanya noluphando?**

- Akukho bungozi ozibeka kuko ngokuzibandakanya koluphando.

### **Xa ungafuni kundincedisa, ingaba ikhona enye into?**

- Xa ungafuni kuzubandakanya noluphando ungoyiki utsho. Akukho izokwenzeka kuwe.

**Ngubani ozoba nemvume yokujonga okanye afunde yonke into esiyithethileyo?**

- Ngumphandi ophambili nabafundisi bakhe. Ukhumbule ke ukuba kungenzeka kubekho abantu abakwaziyo. Yonke into esizakuthetha ngayo yimfihlo yethu. Kodwa xa uthanda ungacela ukuba igama lakhonlokwenyani lisetyenziswe xa sele sibhala iziphumo zophando.

**Ingaba uzakubhatalwa ngokuzibndakanya koluphando okanye zikhona iindleko?**

- Hayi akukho mali uzoyibhatala futhi kungekho mali ifunwa kuwe. Nto nje uzakubhatalelwa imali yeteksi neyokutya.

**Okokugqibela khumbula oku kulandelayo:**

- Ungafowunela umphandi ophambili uLieketseng Ned kule namba 0825451370 xa unemibuzo okanye uhlangabezana nengxaki.
- Ungafowunela idyunivesithi yase**Stellenbosch kwikomiti eyodwa ejongene nempatho namalungelo abantu xa kusenziwa uphando.** 0219389207 xa unezikhalazo okanye ungenelisekanga yindlela eluqhutywa ngayo oluphando.
- Nawe uzawubanayo eyakho ikopi yelencaza. Ze uyigcine kakuhle.

**Xa uvuma ukuba ube ngomye wabantu ababandakanywa koluphando, ndicela utyikitye lencwadi yesivumelwano ilandelayo uyinikezele kumphandi lowo.**

Ozithobileyo

Lieketseng Ned

Umphandi Ophambili

**Incwadi Yesivumelwano:**

Ngokutyikitya apha mna..... ONGUMZALI

Ka.....ndiyavuma ukubandakanywa koluphando lusihloko sithi - *Uphando lokuqonda ubudlelwane obungakhona phakathi kwemfundo nolwazi lwemveli nolwazi olufunyanwa ngokwemfundo yasesikolweni. Injongo kukufumanisa ubana obu budlelwane bungasetyenziswa njani ukukhuthaza impilo engcono nokuphilisana kwabantu: Olu luphando olujongene nendawo eyodwa ekhethiweyo eMzantsi Afrika ngokuba ibalasele ngezinto zemveli.*

Ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyifundile okanye ndiyifundelwe lencazelo ngophando futhi ibhalwe ngolwimi endilwaziyo nendikwazi ukulithetha.
- Ndilinike ithuba lokubuza imibuzo futhi ndenelisekile.
- Ndiyayiqonda into yokokuba ukubandakanyeka kwam kolu phando kuxhomekeke kum andiqweqwediswa.
- Ndingayeka noba kunini na impilo yam inakuthintelwa nto.
- Ndingacelwa ngumphandi ophambili ukuba ndiyeke ndingaqhubeki nophando xa ngaba kubonakala ukuba andiniki lutho akanye ndiyagwenxa.
- Ndiyayiqonda ukuba ingxoxo nentetho yethu izakuthwetyulwa ngonomathotholo.
- Ndiyavuma ukuba iifoto zithathwe

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ingqina

**Isivumelwano nomphandi ophambili:**

Mna Lieketseng Ned ndiyakuvuma oku kulandelayo:

- Ndiyicacisile yonke into ebhalwe apha ku \_\_\_\_\_
- Ndimkhuthazile ukuba abuze yonke imibuzo anayo futhi ndathatha ixesha elaneleyo ukumenelisa ngeempendulo
- Ndiqinisekile futhi ndiyakholwa ukuba ucacelwe ngayo yonke into equka oluphando njengoko sithethile
- Akhange ndicele uncedo lukatoliki

Ityikitywe e (bhala igama lendawo) \_\_\_\_\_  
umhla \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tyikitya mphandi

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ingqina

## Co-Researchers Training Manual

# Training Manual for co-researchers



**Title of research:** An exploration of the potential relevance of an interplay between Indigenous and formal education knowledges to contribute to health and wellbeing of communities: A case study of an indigenous South African community.

**Name of researcher:** Lieketseng Ned

**Study site:** Xhora, Eastern Cape

**(Translated IsisXhosa Version Available)**

### The basics

<p><b>What does it mean to be a research assistant?</b></p>	<p>Research assistants are people who act as co-researchers, assisting the researchers during the process of a research study or project. They often become full or partial participants of the research process, especially in a qualitative research process. (This is the type of research we are doing here and we will explain it further down). This is because they keep a record of their experiences, thoughts and feelings during the research process, and this information will form part of the research analysis.</p>
<p><b>Why would we like to have you as a research assistant?</b></p>	<p>We have invited you to be a research assistant in this study because firstly, you come from this area and are very familiar with the place and surroundings, secondly you understand and speak isiXhosa in the dialect of the people of the research context. Thirdly, you understand the way of being of the AmaBomvane and so you will assist with highlighting the accepted and unaccepted cultural values and approaches of the people, respecting the due traditional processes and acceptable conduct.</p> <p>We are also hoping that through this process you can gain research skills and knowledge which you can use elsewhere in your community.</p>

## Role Descriptions

What will you be expected to as a research assistant?	
<p>You will first attend training on being a research assistant. This will help you to understand the study and the research process better as well as what is expected of you. You will be paid for participating in training and performing the roles of research assistant.</p>	
<p><b>What are some of the tasks you will be involved in?</b></p>	<p>You will advise on being respectful to the practices and ways of the community all the time, during the study.</p> <p>You will be involved in asking people questions to answer (interviewing).</p> <p>You will be trained on how to conduct these interviews.</p> <p>You will be asked to assist with ensuring the recording of interviews and talking circles.</p> <p>You may be asked to assist with photographing.</p> <p>You will be involved in debriefing sessions after each set of data is gathered.</p> <p>You will be trained to participate in doing observations as well as how to document these observations using a reflective journal. You will be asked to keep this journal for the duration of the study to document your thoughts, feelings and lessons.</p> <p>You will assist with activities ensuring that perceptions of participants are presented and interpreted well.</p> <p>You will also assist with facilitating feedback workshops.</p>

	You will assist with getting consensus from participants about data collected
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**What is the study about?**

This study wants to find out how knowledges from the home and those from the school speak to each other and how can a potential connection can be strengthened for better health and well-being of the communities and its people. I am doing this study to find out what health related knowledges of AmaBomvane could play a role in strengthening the connections with the formal schooling.

The primary aim of this study is to explore and describe the potential relevance of Indigenous knowledges in transforming the formal education system for better health and well-being.

**What will this study help us understand?**

This study will help us understand:

- the disconnect and alienation experienced from formal education by Indigenous rural people of a specific community from their perspective.
- the key health-related Indigenous knowledges, concepts and values that could potentially address the gaps causing alienation and disconnect within the formal education system.
- how the identified knowledges can guide the creation of contextualised relevant education that does not alienate children from their cultural identities and origins.

**This study information will help and be used to:**

Advocate for the recognition and valuing of Indigenous knowledges as valid knowledges which should be brought to the formal school curriculum.

It is also to give Key recommendations to key stakeholders within the National Education System, Health Education and IKS scholars.

**Type of research and Research Methods**

There are two types of data. You will only be required to gather one type- this is called qualitative data.

Qualitative data is used when you want to hear more talk, conversations or stories about an issue that you are interested in. You may not know much about the issue, so you want to explore it more and go deeper into the issue of interest for better understanding. The stories are mainly about someone else's experiences and knowledges that they share with you. This type of data is not about numbers so you cannot measure it. It is about the quality of the conversations rather, about descriptions and explanations of an issue based on how the person you are talking to sees it or has experienced it and is very much contextual related.

Qualitative research is used when we do not know what to expect, to define a problem or develop an approach to the problem. It is also used to go deeper into issues of interest.

**Where do research questions come from?**

Research questions come from the problems identified by the community. It might be a problem that comes out of personal interest or a problem you identified from your work experience or society where you live. Then discuss the issue with other people who are knowledgeable about the issue and also read what has been written about the issue. This helps in understanding what is already known about the issue.

After this you now come up with the aims and objectives of your research. These are the things or outcomes you want to achieve from doing this research. The aims and objectives will also help you decide what it is exactly that you want to know from doing this research? This is your research question. The aims, objectives, research questions and what you hope to achieve at the end of your research will guide you to formulate the questions you use to talk with people for your interview.

- Identify problem
- Find out more about it
- Decide what you want to know about the problem and achieve from the research
- Come up with your aims, objectives and research questions
- Develop the questions you want to ask people to discuss with you about the problem

### How to gather data?

There are many ways of gathering data. It can be through asking questions or it can be through stories. For this study, you will collect data through the use of probing questions to get people to give their responses to you in the form of storytelling. You will also use pictures to get people to tell you.

For example, you will ask the older people to tell you about some of the knowledges they facilitate within their homes and villages and ask them to share how these can make formal schooling relevant to their ways of doing and living. You will also ask people how their participation on key activities of their village is helping them with creating and understanding their own knowledges and who they are. Lastly how is all this contributing to their everyday doing and living?

There are many data sources that one can use. For this training, we will focus on the following five:

#### **1. What are talking circles and stories?**

Talking circles are Indigenous focus groups used in most African settings for daily meetings within the community to address issues. This is very similar to the structure of Imbizos. People come together as equals and share ideas, respect for each other's ideas and continuous compassion for one another which are key values in this community. An object is usually used to move around and only the holder of the object speaks at a time. The greatest structure of talking circles is that while one person is narrating a story, the other people listen silently until the speaker is finished.

Storytelling: stories are central to the lives of Indigenous people and are used to collect, deposit, analyse, store and disseminate information as well as instruments for socialisation. It is important that researchers too acknowledge stories as circulating literature that is accessible to all people and informs the day to day experiences and practices of Indigenous people.

## **2. What are Interviews?**

This is about talking with someone to better understand an issue that you are interested in.

## **3. What are observations?**

Observations is when you are observing the daily routines, practices and activities within the village and document these as they happen in their natural context. These can be documented either through photographing or writing about them in your journal. These observations also happen during interviewing sessions and talking circles.

## **4. What are photographs and photo voice?**

Photos can be used as data trigger tools in the talking circles to facilitate the storytelling process. Photo-voice is a qualitative data collection tool which combines both photography and participant stories to create descriptive evidence of everyday realities. Photographs can be seen as a form of story-telling and are particularly effective as a resource for the storytelling process. The use of photo-voice is a powerful emancipatory data collection tool that puts power into the hands of the participants. To avoid the direct 5WH question-answer which may lead what is to be included in the stories being told, using photos helps the narrator to take control by firstly taking photos of what he/she wants to share and then using these photos to tell their story. Here, the participants are given time to go and take these photos during their own time.

Photographs are also helpful to capture the environment because they are contextual and activities happening that may add value to the research in-between interviews and during spontaneous times. They also assist with giving a thick description of the context of the research. Remember to ask consent before taking photographs especially if you are taking photographs of people. The consent form will also ask permission for photographs

### **5. What is reflective journaling?**

This is about jotting down your own thoughts, feelings and lessons throughout the research process as well as some key issues that come up as you participate in this study. There are four steps to follow when reflecting and that is; Action- Reflection- Learning-Planning. The last step then informs the actions again.

## **What is data analysis?**

Data analysis is a very important aspect of the research process. It has the ability to make the research very strong and reliable, or it can make the research weak and unreliable. You will be involved in this process closely with the researchers all through to ensure that the analysis of data is strong and reliable. There are different types of analysis you can do, that are based on the type of data collected

### **How to analyze data:**

You will be involved in doing a thematic data analysis.

The analysis process will involve:

1. To translate and transcribe data collected from interviews
2. To listen to the recorded interviews again with the researcher, identifying and explaining pauses and relevant incidences
3. To apply your knowledge of the research context and way of life of AmaBomvane to the interpretation of the recorded interviews
4. To check all photographs and label them correctly according to source and themes
5. To read your reflections of the process and identify critical incidences that occurred during data collection
6. There will also be a process of putting the stories together

You will be involved in some of these steps

## Individual and group interview process and skills

<b><i>Interview skills</i></b>	
<b>Meet and greet</b>	When you meet the people you want to interview, you must make sure that you are polite and respectful. Please remember to greet everyone you meet and smile to make them feel welcomed. It is very important to get to know people and respond when they also ask you and where you are from. Be on the lookout for a way of greeting in that particular village.
<b>Listening</b>	It is very important to listen to the people you are interviewing. This shows respect, and so you can also pick up any comments they make that you might want them to clarify for you, or give more information regarding it. This is particularly very important in storytelling.
<b>Eye contact</b>	When it comes to eye contact, you can do what is respectful in the AmaBomvane culture and also assist me to understand this. In certain places you can look at any person in the eye while you talk, but in some customs it is considered disrespectful to look elders in the eye while you talk with them. So ask them what is appropriate and respect their way of doing things. Through observing, you will also be able to pick up these cues.
<b>Offering some facial or verbal encouragement</b>	Please remember that it is important to show that you are following the conversation and listening by the way you keep your face and your tone. Smile, nod your head and show that you understand by the expression on your face. However, please be aware that you do not nod when the response is not clear and you need them to clarify or repeat as this can be misleading.
<b>Nodding</b>	Like stated above, affirm their words by nodding often to show encouragement and support for what they are saying. This also acts as a way to support their experiences.
<b>Prompting</b>	When the people you are interviewing say something you feel is important for the study to know, you must prompt them by asking for more information about the issue they raised. Sometimes they will pause or keep quiet, you can ask another related question to help them open up again, then later come back to the original topic again to ask a question. Another way of prompting is to ask the same question in a different way, which might be clearer for them

	to answer. This is why listening is important, so that you can hear what they say and know when to prompt them gently. This process is also requiring you to understand the use of similar prompts for similar situations.
<b>Do not interrupt</b> <b>Don't be afraid of pauses and silences</b> <b>This gives the person some time to think</b>	When people you are interviewing sometimes become silent or they pause, you must not rush them, do not think they must be talking throughout the interview, sometimes they will pause and stop talking. Always give them time to keep silent when they need to, it gives them time to think. Sometimes you can ask "is this question difficult?" Would you rather respond to another question or talk about another area of the topic or do you want to come back later?" And if they say yes, you can move on to another question. However, always leave them to pause and be silent for a bit when they need to.
<b>Do not lead</b>	Do not ask questions in a way that show your own opinion or that show how you feel about the issue or topic you are discussing. This might influence what they want to say and they will end up saying what they feel that you want to hear, and not THEIR OWN thoughts. Remember it is THEIR OWN opinion that we want, so be sensitive about influencing their thoughts in any way. Also do not ask in a way that may limit their sharing especially in the storytelling. Try by all means to avoid phrasing questions as WHs questions but rather use phrases like, can you tell me more about....or use photos or real life vignettes of their context.
<b>Appropriate dress (neat and tidy)</b>	You must be dressed in a way that conforms to the traditions and culture of the people so that they do not feel disrespected. In some cultures, women are expected to cover their hair as a sign of virtuousness and respect for the elders. So you will ask for what is appropriate for this context and dress accordingly. Also please present yourself neat and tidy
<b>Use appropriate language</b> <b>Not too casual or too informal</b>	Your language and tone of voice is important. In traditional contexts, language and tone can mean a lot and people can become easily offended by language or tone of voice used. For example, the words and tone you use to greet an elder is often different from the words and language you use for a younger person in certain contexts. So please be aware of this. On the other hand, if you are too serious and formal, it might put people off and they will not open up



	with you. You must constantly show warmth to the people you interview through your words, expression and actions.
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### ***Learning more about the Interview process***

<b>Preparing for the interview</b>	
<b>Preparing yourself in reflective space</b>	Prepare yourself by looking inwards inside your heart to check what pre-conceived ideas or assumptions you already have about the interview, the people you will interview, and the topic of the interview. This is where you will begin by first interrogating and understanding your own thoughts about spirituality and wellbeing. What are your own experiences of this issue? Your belief systems about it? You will have a reflective space with the researchers where we unpack what our current stance is with regards to the research topic. This is very important so that we are able to make clear our own beliefs and understanding in a bid to be aware of possible ways that it can influence the research process as a whole. This will also help us maintain an attitude of non-judgementalism and empathy during the interview as we realise that people have different experiences which must be honoured and respected.
<b>Starting phase (Beginning)</b>	
<b>Meet and greet:</b>	When you arrive to do the interview, follow the protocol that obtains in the context. Greet everyone appropriately, introduce yourself and wait for the other person/people to introduce themselves. Wait to be offered a seat, then you sit down. This process of greeting is often combined with small talk so that people get to know which family, clan and lineage everybody involved in the interview process comes from. From experience, the greeting and small talk in the traditional contexts often take longer so you must exercise patience and go through this process to show respect and to the satisfaction of your interviewees.

<b>Conducting the interview</b>	
<b>Clarify the purpose of the interview</b>  <b>Why are we here today</b>	After the small talk is done, while observing appropriate protocol, explain about the study, and why you are conducting this interview, what it is all about. At this point ask if they want to ask you any questions? Tell them how long the interview process is expected to take and ask them if this is fine with them?

	<p>Next give them a copy of the information sheet and consent form translated to Xhosa (the researchers have gone through this with you already). Please go through each paragraph of the information sheet and consent form, reading and explaining what every paragraph means. As you go, stop often to ask them if they understand you, and if they have any questions for you? Clarify any queries and answer any questions asked. The researcher will be with you throughout this process, so will assist with answers to any queries you might not be able to answer.</p> <p>If your participants agree to the interview after you have read the information sheet and consent form to them, then ask them to please sign it, or place their thumbprint on the lines as relevant.</p> <p>CONFIDENTIALITY- This is very important. We cannot stress enough how important</p>
<b>EXPLORATION PHASE (Asking the questions)</b>	
<p><b>Asking the questions:</b></p> <p><b>Open-ended questions</b></p> <p>Short, simple, open-ended questions</p> <p>Starting with WHAT instead of DID</p> <p><b>Elaboration:</b></p>	<p>Ask questions that give your participants the space to tell their stories, to open up and narrate their experiences. There are different kinds of questions you can ask your participants in a way that helps them talk more about it. Some examples of these types of questions are given below-</p> <p><b>Open ended questions-</b> Examples are questions like “What are your experiences regarding.”?</p> <p>“Can you tell me more about that?” or “Is there anything else you would like to add?” This will give them room to talk more about their experiences and views regarding the topic of interest.</p>
<p><b>Restate</b></p> <p><b>Reflect (Validate)</b></p> <p><b>Clarify (Focus)</b></p> <p><b>Interpret</b></p>	<p><b>Restatement:</b> Sometimes during the interview, you will find that you repeat what they have said in their own word, to be sure you are hearing them correctly. This also builds up rapport as it lets your participants know that you have been listening to them and paying attention.</p> <p><b>Reflect:</b> If you notice your participants showing some emotion regarding something they are discussing or talking about, you can pull that out and ask them about it. This is called reflecting</p>

	<p>(like you reflected when you were preparing for the interview.)</p> <p>For example, if your participant talks about a time when they felt safer living in their community and you can sense the sadness behind the statement, you can ask them about it and say “ I can see that you feel sad when you say that” , do you want to tell me more about your feelings about your safety?”</p> <p><b>Clarify:</b> This occurs when you want your participants to explain something further. It can be something they said and you feel it is significant for the study, or something that is new and resonates with you, and you want them to go deeper into that specific topic for your clarity. In this aspect you always go from a broader issue to a more specific aspect. For example, if your participants talks about feeling unsafe in the community for example, you could then ask “you have talked about feeling unsafe in your community, but can you tell me what it is exactly that is making you feel unsafe here?” So you dig deeper for a specific reason or a specific factor based on the particular broad issue they have mentioned initially.</p> <p><b>Interpret:</b> This kind of question wants to ensure understanding. So you use this when you want to be sure that you understand what your participant is saying, that you are getting the essence of what they say. One key criteria for interpretation is that you are ASKING, NOT STATING, so you must phrase it as a question and give your participant room to agree or disagree. For example, if your participant states that there is co cooperation in this community because of the different knowledges that are dividing people, then you can ask “if I get you correctly, are you saying that there are different types of knowledges in the community that is dividing the community?”</p>
<b>Ending the interview</b>	
<p><b>Summarise</b></p> <p>Encourage a speaker to tell you anything you might have missed in your questions.</p> <p><b>Affirm &amp; thank</b></p>	<p>When the interview comes to an end, summarise what the main points of the discussion has been about. Remember to invite your participant to ask any further questions they may have about the research or interview process. Inform your participant of how beneficial the interview has been for you, and express your hope that they have benefited from the interview too. Also ask them if they want to add anything further to what they have said during the interview. If they have nothing further they want to add, then thank them for granting you the time and for sharing their experiences with you. End the interview.</p>

## Ethics and confidentiality

The most important is that we do research in a manner that is acceptable and respectful to the community and you will be able to guide me as well in this process as you better understand the community. To prevent any harm to participants and to protect or respect the rights of everyone involved, it is important to ensure that the study is guided by specific ethical guidelines. The guidelines are considered during the planning of research, during the collection of data and afterwards in the process of writing about the data to consciously avoid any positions of vulnerability that may be possible towards the participants as well as the information they have provided to the researcher. It is important to ensure that their rights and voices are not in any way violated and silenced.

<b>What are some of the fundamental principles of ethics to keep in mind?</b>	
<b>Informed consent</b>	<p>It is important to make sure that people understand what the study is about before they can make any decision to participate. An information and consent form is a sheet that is prepared by the researcher explaining the study and what is expected from the participant. This sheet must be easy-to-read and preferably in local languages of participants. This sheet will cover the role of each participant and benefits to participating in the study; how the information will be recorded and managed; how anonymity, privacy and confidentiality will be managed and also ensure people that they have a right to withdraw from the research at any time. It is also important to always give our contact details so that people are able to contact us if they have any questions.</p> <p>As a research assistant, it is important to ensure that participants all sign this sheet as an indication of agreeing to participate.</p>
<b>Respect for persons and their community</b>	<p>Respecting participants also includes respecting their dignity as well as the knowledge they will be sharing. It is also about respecting people as who they are and their ways of doing. Being part of this study therefore includes taking into account the people, their ways and context at all times by not imposing your ways thereby</p>

	treating everyone with respect. This also means respecting the values embedded in the community and protect the community from harm. It is about honoring the concept of Ubuntu and seeing yourself as the reflection of participants therefore you do to them as you would wish to be done to you.
<b>Beneficence, non-maleficence, justice or fairness</b>	<p>Beneficence is about balancing the risks and benefits of the study to ensure that the risks are outweighed by the benefits. Non-maleficence is ensuring no harm at all times. This study has no/minimal risks. It is our responsibility to take special care not to stigmatize participants but to ensure their safety. We will be doing this by conducting this study in an environment that they are comfortable in, such as their homes and using methods that are familiar and will not bring violence or harm.</p> <p>Following this, is the issue of fairness or justice. Listening, paying attention and bringing out the voices of the participants and ensuring that the benefits accrue to both us as researchers and the participants is part of maintaining fairness. Benefits are distributed</p>
<b>Privacy and confidentiality</b>	<p>This is about valuing and respecting the privacy and confidentiality of people and the information they share at all times. People will be given a voice to decide how they want their names to be managed and they should be informed if they will be easily identifiable so that they can make an informed decision as to whether they still want to participate and whether they want to be anonymized or they want their real identities to be identified.</p>

## Probing Questions guides

(Translated IsiXhosa versions available)

### TALKING CIRCLES GUIDE FOR CUSTODIANS OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE VILLAGES.

1. Tell me more about what health and well-being means for you in this community? How is this understanding influencing what you do and how you live daily?
2. What are the activities that children are encouraged to engage in, in this community to enable them to contribute to health and well-being?
3. What health related knowledges and skills are carried in the performance of these activities within the homes and community?
4. What is your role in facilitating this knowledge and skills in their homes?
  - How do adults facilitate this knowledge?
  - How are these activities role played within the home and community?
5. How do you facilitate the transference of skills and knowledge amongst children within the home?
6. What is education?
  - How do you educate?
  - Tell me more about what it means to not be educated?
7. What is knowledge?
8. What is schooling?
9. What is Indigenous knowledge (Ulwazi Lwemvelo)?
  - How does it influence knowing?
  - How does it influence schooling?
  - How does it influence education?
10. What health related concepts of IK do you perceive could be further facilitated by the present education system? What are the values facilitated in these concepts?
11. How should these health-related IK concepts be integrated in the present education system?
12. What is the value of learning about local history, cultures and languages?
13. What is the understanding of development in this community?
14. What do you mean by development of people?
15. How can education given in this community further enhance the health and well-being ideals of this community?

INTERVIEWS/ FOCUS GROUPS WITH CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS,  
PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS.

1. What is education?
2. How does one educate?
3. What is not to be educated?
4. What is knowledge?
5. What is schooling?
6. What is Indigenous knowledge (Ulwazi Lwemvelo)?
7. How does it influence knowing?
8. How does it influence schooling?
9. How does it influence education?
10. Should IK be integrated to the present education system?
11. How is the present education system preparing learners to become participating adults within their communities?
12. Where do you get curriculum from?
13. Is there any knowledge that is developed in the homes?
  - If yes, how is this knowledge used at the school?
  - How is the knowledge facilitated at school feeding back to the homes?
14. How do you ensure that the curriculum speaks to the people and their environment?
15. Within the spaces of school, is there any space for linking curriculum with the local knowledge of this community?
16. How is the school integrating the understanding of the people and their environments?
17. What is the value of learning about local history, cultures and languages?
18. What is the understanding of development in this community?
19. What is the development of people?
20. How can education given in this community further enhance the development ideals of this community?



### TALKING CIRCLES WITH THE LEARNERS

During the interviews, the probing question will be asked in the format of “tell me more about” and not the “W” question format to minimise directing and limiting the narration process. I will only interject for clarification purposes or only when the participant significantly goes off the topic to minimise interruptions. Using the pictures that the learners would have taken prior the interviews to understand what the key activities that the learners engage in at home and at school, the meaning and knowledge gained from participating in these activities and lastly how their contexts shape this participation- the following questions will be used to facilitate the narrations:

1. Tell me more about where and when you participate in this activity? (location and environmental surroundings)
2. With whom do you participate in this activity? Tell me what generally happens before and after the participation.
3. Is there any person who watches and/or helps you?
4. What do you learn from participating in this activity?
5. Is there any difference with what you participate in at schools versus what you participate in at home?
  - How is it different or how is it the same?
6. What are the activities you participate in at school?
  - What do you learn from engaging in these activities?
7. Which activities make you feel good about yourself? Why do you think this is so?
8. What you learn at school, how does it help you at home and in the community?
9. How do you practise what you learn at home when you are at school?
10. What opportunities are you given to practice the knowledge given?
11. How would you describe the knowledge you gain at home? How would you describe the one you gain at school?
12. Do you see any connection between what you do at home and what you do at school? Tell me more about this...
13. Do you see any connection between what you learn at home and what you learn at school? Tell me more about this...